

THE WORLD'S EPOCH-MAKERS.
EDITED BY OLIPHANT SMEATON.

Plato

By
Professor D. G. RITCHIE, LL.D.

United College, Bradford.

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OLIPHANT SMEATON

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By David G. Ritchie, M.A., LL.D.

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Plato

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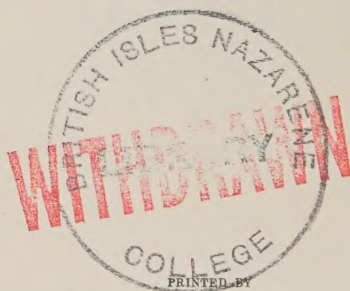
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PREFACE

IN writing this book I have assumed that I am addressing those who are willing to read a good deal of Plato himself. The late Professor Jowett has made Plato an English classic, so that a knowledge of Greek is not an absolute necessity for understanding and appreciating the philosopher, to some extent at least. In the text of the volume I have used Greek words sparingly, and never without interpretation. The only references in the text are to Plato's *Dialogues*, to Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, and to some of those parts of Aristotle which are our best commentary on Plato. Unfortunately there is no tolerable English translation of the *Metaphysics*, except one of the First Book by "A Cambridge Graduate" (published by Macmillan), which, if corrected, might be very useful.

The Notes which I have added are intended to give the student the means of judging for himself as to the reasonableness of what is said in the text. To write on Plato is to tread on controversial ground at every step, and it is not easy to be at once brief and accurate. Some reference to authorities seemed to me indispensable. These references indicate, though only in part, my obligations to some of those who in recent

years have done so much for the study of Plato. It seemed to me the more necessary to add Notes, because I have ventured to adopt a rather different view of some Platonic questions from that which is taken in many of the best known Histories of Philosophy. Thus, on the relation of Plato to Socrates on the one side, and to Aristotle on the other, the opinions here given diverge somewhat from those most commonly held. I have followed Grote and Jowett, and, indeed, most modern scholars, in seeking to keep the image of Plato free from Neo-Platonic incrustations. I have endeavoured to treat the development of Plato's own thought in the light of recent researches respecting the order of the Dialogues. But I trust that I have kept the distinction clear between what is certain and what is merely hypothetical. If this little book prove to be helpful to those beginning the study of Plato, or if it suggest to any student a better solution of some of the problems here raised, it will best fulfil its purpose.

The original intention of the Editor of this Series was that Plato and Aristotle should be dealt with in one volume. On trying to work out this plan, which in my opinion had much to recommend it, I found that the treatment—too condensed, perhaps, as it is—would have to be made too slight to be of use. I hope I may at some time be able to add a companion volume on Aristotle, or, I should rather say, on some parts and aspects of Aristotelian philosophy.

In the naming of Platonic Dialogues, and in the writing of Greek names generally, I have not attempted to observe a strict uniformity, but have followed the analogy of our ordinary literary usage with respect

to foreign names. It seems to me absurd to write "Sokrates," unless we are going to write "Platon" and "Aristoteles"; and Mr. Grote's "Demokritus" and "Herakleitus" are monstrous hybrids. When a name is very familiar, we make it thoroughly English *e.g.* we say "*The Republic*" or "*The Laws*," just as we speak of "The Hague" or "The Vatican" or "Plutarch's *Lives*." Where it is less familiar, the literary tradition undoubtedly is to use the Latin adaptations of Greek names (*e.g.* *Politicus* and *Symposium*). Where the Latin form would give rise to ambiguity in an unfamiliar Greek name, an exact transliteration may well be adopted (*e.g.* *Ion*).

I have to thank my colleague Professor J. Burnet and Mr. John Sime of this University and of Balliol College, Oxford, for their kindness in looking through my proofs, and for several important suggestions. I must, however, take upon myself the full responsibility for the opinions I have adopted, and for any errors that may have been overlooked in the references and citations, or in the use made of them.

DAVID G. RITCHIE.

ST. ANDREWS,
Christmas Day, 1901.

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PLATO



CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF PLATO

SEVERAL "Lives" of Plato have reached us from the ancient world—all of late date. There is, first, a brief biography prefixed by Apuleius to his account of Platonic doctrines; then there is the careless patchwork contained in the third book of Diogenes Laertius. There is the Life written by Olympiodorus, one of the last of the Neo-Platonic philosophers in the time of the Emperor Justinian, and an Anonymous Life, which must also be of very late date ⁽¹⁾. In these we may discern the main stream of tradition about Plato, fluctuating in some of its details, but fairly definite in its central channel. From a "harmony" of such uncritical authorities we may put together the legend of Plato, as it had come to be accepted under the later Roman Empire.

Plato was born in the eighty-eighth Olympiad (*i.e.* about 427 B.C.) ⁽²⁾, in an Athenian family of high descent, according to some in Athens itself, according to another

account in Ægina, where his father had received an allotment of land under the Athenian system of military colonisation. His father's name was Ariston and his mother's Perictione; and his mother's family were of the kinship of Solon, the lawgiver of Athens, so that it was fitting that Plato, in his *Republic* and *Laws*, should be a lawgiver also. Now Solon was descended from Neleus, who was the son of the god Poseidon; and Ariston, too, was descended from Codrus, the last of the kings of Athens, who was likewise descended from Poseidon. But the divinity of Plato was attested not only by these two genealogies; for he was of still closer kinship to the god Apollo, the sun-god, whose name certain of the later philosophers identified with "the One," since it signifies "Not many" (³). Speusippus, Plato's own nephew and successor in the Academy, and likewise Clearchus, a pupil of Aristotle's, as well as later writers, say that it was commonly believed at Athens, that when Ariston took Perictione to wife, the god Apollo appeared to him in a dream and told him that his wife was already with child, and that the child was Apollo's own son. Moreover, Plato was born on the seventh day of Thargelion (that is, towards the end of our month of May), on which day the people of Delos say that Apollo himself was born; and Plato died on the same day of the same month, after he had lived nine times nine years, which is nine times the number of the Muses who are the attendants of Apollo. And when the child Plato was born, his parents took him to Mount Hymettus, and offered prayers and sacrifices on his behalf to Pan and the Nymphs, and to Apollo the Shepherd; and, whilst the child lay there, the bees

came and filled his mouth with honey, that it might be true of him which was said—

“His speech shall flow sweeter than honey.”

Now Socrates had a dream that a young swan alighted on his knees, and then straightway put forth feathers and flew up with a sweet cry; and on the next day Plato came to him, and he saw the meaning of his dream; for the swan is the bird of Apollo, and the dream signified that Plato would come to him imperfect but would go away from him perfect. Moreover, Plato used to call himself a fellow-servant with the swans, signifying that he was sacred to Apollo. And, when Plato was about to die, he had a dream that he became a swan, and flew about from tree to tree, and so gave great trouble to the fowlers who sought to catch him. But Simmias, the disciple of Socrates, expounded the dream, saying that the fowlers are they that seek to interpret the meaning of Plato. Thus it is clear that Plato was divine and the son of the god Apollo.

He was taught letters by Dionysius, and gymnastics by Ariston of Argos, and music by Dracon, who was the pupil of Damon. At first he had been called after his grandfather Aristocles; but his teacher of gymnastics called him “Platon,” because of the broadness of his shoulders, or because of the broadness of his forehead; and in his statues he is always represented with both broad forehead and broad shoulders. Some, however, seek a less physical origin for the name, and say that he received it because of his ample and flowing style of speech. As a youth he wrestled at the Isthmian games. Apuleius says he contended in wrestling at

both the Pythian and Isthmian; and others say that he was twice victor, once at the Olympian and once at the Nemean games. He three times served on military expeditions, once to Tanagra, a second time against Corinth, and the third time at Delium. He applied himself also to painting and to writing poems, dithyrambic and tragic and of other kinds. But when he came to know Socrates, though he was about to contend for the prize with a tragedy, he burnt all his poems, and gave himself wholly to philosophy. And he was twenty years of age when he became a disciple of Socrates, and, when Socrates was gone, Plato attached himself to Cratylus, the Heraclitean (though others say Cratylus had taught him before he came under the influence of Socrates), and to Hermogenes, who followed the principles of Parmenides. When he was twenty-eight years of age he withdrew to Megara, along with some other pupils of Socrates, and there associated with the philosopher Euclides. Thereafter he went to Cyrene to Theodorus the mathematician, and to Italy to the Pythagoreans, and to Egypt to visit the priests. He purposed also to visit the Magians in Persia, but gave up his purpose because of the wars in Asia Minor. Some say that he reached Phœnicia and met the Magians there, and was instructed in the doctrines of Zoroaster⁽⁴⁾.

Returning from his wanderings to Athens, Plato began to teach in the grove of the hero Academus. He took no part in politics⁽⁵⁾, though he was a statesman in his writings. It is said that he defended the general, Chabrias, impeached on a capital charge, when no other citizen would take up his cause. As he was going up towards the Acropolis with his client,

Crobylus, the accuser ("sycophant" in the Greek sense), met him and said, "Are you come to plead for another, knowing not that the hemlock of Socrates awaits you also?" But Plato answered, "When I fought for my country I encountered dangers; and now, too, I encounter them in the cause of justice and for the defence of a friend." One writer of history says that he was invited by the Thebans and Arcadians to be the legislator of their new city, Megalopolis; but he declined.

Plato made three voyages to Sicily. In the first he went to see the island and the burning mountain Etna; and there Dionysius, the ruler of Syracuse, sent for him and discoursed with him; but when the philosopher spoke freely about the nature of government, Dionysius was wroth, and told him he spoke like an old man. And Plato answered, "You speak like a tyrant." Dionysius took this ill, and purposed to slay him. But yielding to the entreaty of Plato's friends, Dion and Aristomenes, he spared the life of the philosopher, and handed him over to a certain Lacedæmonian, who chanced to be there on an embassy, in order that he might sell him as a slave. And the Lacedæmonian brought him to Ægina, and put him up for sale. But the Æginetans at that time had made a law that the first Athenian who set foot on their island should be put to death without a trial; and so they were about to kill Plato, when someone in sport said that he who had landed was a philosopher, and so they set him free. But others say that they brought him before the assembly and watched him; but he spoke not a word, and was ready to accept whatever should happen. And they decided not to kill him,

but to sell him as a prisoner of war. Now, a certain Anniceris, of Cyrene, chanced to be there, and ransomed him for twenty minæ (others say for thirty), and sent him to Athens to his friends. And they at once sent the money for the ransom to Anniceris; but he would not receive it, saying that they were not the only people who were worthy to care for Plato. Others say that it was Dion who sent the money to Anniceris, who could not accept it, but, over and above what he had done, bought a garden for Plato in the Academy⁽⁶⁾. When Dionysius heard what had happened he wrote to Plato, asking him not to speak evil of him; and Plato answered that he had not leisure to think of Dionysius at all⁽⁷⁾.

When the younger Dionysius had succeeded his father, Plato went again to Sicily, hoping that he might obtain from him land and citizens to found there-with his perfect commonwealth. But though Dionysius made him promises, he did not fulfil them. Some say that Plato fell under suspicion of supporting Dion in his endeavour to free the island from tyrannical government. But Archytas, the Pythagorean, wrote to Dionysius, and induced him to send Plato back in safety to Athens. Afterwards Plato journeyed yet a third time to Sicily, that he might reconcile Dion with Dionysius. But he did not succeed, and returned to Athens, having effected nothing.

Plato had a strong burly figure, but a thin voice. He was never known to laugh excessively, and his appearance was so striking that at the Olympic games all the Greeks turned round to look at him. He died at a wedding-feast; and when he died he was buried in the grove of Academus, where he had taught his

disciples for many years; and the whole city attended his funeral. Epitaphs written on him speak of him as a divine man, and join his name with that of Æsculapius, another son of Apollo.

“To mortals Apollo gave Æsculapius and Plato,
The one a healer of the body, the other a
healer of the soul.”

This collection of myths and anecdotes constitutes the story of the outward life of Plato, as it had come to be received by those who counted themselves his followers in the last days of Greek philosophy. If we were merely to set aside the supernatural out of the story, and smooth over the discrepancies of the various versions, we should not obtain certain history. The myth of the paternity of Apollo is probably not more untrue than much of the rest: it seems to be of early origin, and it is at least characteristic of the peculiar reverence in which later generations held the memory of “the divine Plato.” The sobriety of the supernatural element in the tradition may indeed be taken as evidence of its comparatively early, and of its purely Hellenic, origin. The Plato of these uncritical biographies is, on the whole, in keeping with the Plato we know in his works—a brave, strong man, devoted to the pursuit of truth, and eager to establish better government if only he can find the opportunity. He is not pictured as a self-torturing ascetic, nor stripped of his urbanity and humour. The clear-sighted son of the God of Light is not represented as a wizard or miracle-worker, like Apollonius of Tyana, or like Pythagoras, as described by the Theosophists of the Roman Empire. Yet we can see how some of the things recorded of Plato may have simply been suggested by phrases or

names occurring in his writings; other things again imply a confusion of dates which betrays the careless credulity of those who repeat them. A single statement of Aristotle's is of more value than anything taken by Diogenes Laertius from the numerous writers of "Lives" and "Miscellaneous Histories," whose works—themselves only second or third hand authorities—are unknown to us except for such citations. Plato's own writings are, above all, the surest witness to us of what the man Plato really was, though the form of dialogue may leave us uncertain how far Plato accepted the arguments of his chief speaker in each case—his Socrates, his Timæus, his Parmenides, his Eleatic or Athenian Stranger; and we must not suppose that the persons and the chronology, adopted for reasons of dramatic fitness, are direct evidence as to the Socratic or Platonic circles. In many cases, under the names and theories of those who conversed or might have conversed with Socrates, he may be alluding to contemporaries of his own; but the discovery of such allusions is always conjecture and never certainty.

Xenophon only once mentions the name of Plato. He tells us (*Mem.* iii. 6. 1) that Socrates was well-disposed towards Glaucon, the son of Ariston, for the sake of Charmides, the son of Glaucon, and for the sake of Plato. This brief allusion of Xenophon's confirms the traditional account of Plato's family connections; and Plato, in the *Charmides* (157 E) and in the *Timæus* (20 E), tells us of the descent of Critias (who was the first cousin of Charmides) from Dropides, the friend and kinsman of Solon. We may thus accept as a certain historical fact that Plato belonged to a great Athenian family of anti-democratic and Laconising

sympathies; and this may explain his introduction to the Socratic circle, his abstention from political activity under the restored democracy, and a good many things in his attitude towards political institutions.

Greek families of distinction usually claimed descent from some deity⁽⁸⁾, and the intrigues of immortal gods with mortal maidens, which scandalised or amused a more reflective age, had originated in the family pride of earlier and simpler days. Philosophers like Plato spoke of heroes or sages as "divine" or "sons of gods"; and it was only natural to the materialism of more commonplace minds to turn such language into the familiar myth of human mother and divine father. Plato's family pedigrees pointed back to Poseidon; but Apollo, the Sun-God, was a more fitting father for Plato, who himself took the visible sun, which gives light and life to the world, as the symbol of the Idea of the Good, the source of all knowledge and of all existence⁽⁹⁾. The school of Plato kept the birthday of their founder on Apollo's day; and this by itself might be enough to give rise to the myth.

There is nothing by which we can confirm or refute the tradition about the teachers of Plato's boyhood. That he received the customary training in letters, music, and gymnastics we might infer from his own writings; and the names of his instructors may have been handed down correctly. But the dialogue *Erastae* (or *Anti-Erastae*, i.e. "The Rival Lovers"), in which an allusion is made to the schoolmaster Dionysius, is a work of uncertain authorship; and the allusion, in any case, proves nothing except that there was a schoolmaster in Athens of that name. The story of Plato's athletic contests seems to grow—as such stories

usually do—with the lapse of time; though lists of the victors at the leading games were accessible to the careful historian, where such a person existed.

As a young man of military age during the closing years of the Peloponnesian War, Plato would almost certainly be called upon to serve in the field; and, of course, we might say with Grote⁽¹⁰⁾, that there *may* during these years have been expeditions to Tanagra and to Delium of which no record has come down to us. There was a battle at Tanagra when Plato was one year old; *the* battle of Delium was fought when he was three years of age, and *the* battle of Corinth was fought in 394 B.C. Plato might, if he was then near Athens, have been present at this last battle, but it does not come between two expeditions belonging to the later years of the Peloponnesian War; and Grote admits that there can have been no battle of Delium after the battle of Corinth in 394, as Athens was not then at war with Boeotia, so that the story is admittedly inaccurate in some respects. Socrates, however, we know, was at the battle of Delium, and Antisthenes was said to have fought at Tanagra⁽¹¹⁾; and this may have been quite sufficient to start the story about Plato, just as among ourselves the same anecdote comes to be told about different persons, especially when they have occupied similar positions. Diogenes Laertius quotes Aristoxenus, a pupil of Aristotle's, as his authority; but we do not know through what imperfect channels his citation of Aristoxenus may have reached him, and, if Aristoxenus really said that Plato's *Republic* was almost all plagiarised from a work of Protagoras⁽¹²⁾, we are reminded of the noted prowess of Greek liars.

For the philosophical influences that went to form Plato's mind, we have a statement of Aristotle's in the *Metaphysics* (i. c. 6) which helps us to correct the tradition reported by Diogenes. Aristotle says that from his youth up Plato had been acquainted with Cratylus and the opinions of Heraclitus; but that this early Heraclitean doctrine was modified by the influence of Socrates and of the "Italic" philosophy. By the Italic philosophy Aristotle means specially the Pythagorean, though the name seems intended to include also the Eleatic school which Aristotle treats in close connection with the Pythagorean.

That Plato in his earlier days had occupied himself with poetry we can easily believe. A poet he remains in temperament and in feeling for the harmony of words and the beauty of form, in spite of his expulsion of the poets, or most of them, from his ideal state. Of the verses which have come down to us under his name, some may very well be genuine. They are not unworthy of the author of the *Symposium* and the *Phædrus*, though they might be condemned by the sterner moralist who wrote the *Laws* (13). Yet, even if the repentant Plato really burnt the light verses of his early youth, we may be glad that the memory of his countrymen did not forget the lines to Aster or those to Agathon. For reasons alike of language and of manners it is more convenient to paraphrase than to translate literally—

"Stella they named thee, O my star, and thou
Art gazing on the stars above thee now :
Ah, could I be
Myself transformed into the starry skies
That I, with all that multitude of eyes,
Might look on thee !"

“Kissing I had my soul upon my lips,
My soul was rushing from me to my love.”

We may put aside the slanders of enemies about Plato's luxurious and immoral habits; the animosity of the Cynics seems to have found vent in malice. On the other hand, we may equally reject the ideas of a later age which regarded Plato as an ascetic who abstained from animal food⁽¹⁴⁾, and lived a life of perpetual chastity⁽¹⁵⁾. We hear nothing as to his marriage. “The boy Adeimantus” to whom land and other property is bequeathed in the will, which is probably genuine⁽¹⁶⁾, may or may not have been his son or grandson. It would have been unusual in an Athenian of his social position, and it would certainly have been contrary to his own principles as formulated in the *Laws* (vi. 774 A seq.), if Plato had not married and been willing to rear up children for the state.

That Plato had himself pursued the art of painting is hardly proved by his account of colours, that is to say of pigments, in the *Timæus*, to which Olympiodorus refers; and the story may indeed have been suggested by that passage (67 c–68 D). Yet from Aristotle's *Politics* (viii. 3. § 1. 1337b, 25) we learn that *γραφική*—drawing and painting—was included by some among the customary subjects of education, and it is commended by Aristotle as training the artistic judgment (*ibid.* § 7. 1338a, 18).

That Plato visited many lands is the story of all his biographers. But much of what is told us may reasonably be suspected. A withdrawal from Athens after the death of Socrates is inherently quite probable; and a wealthy Athenian, interested in philosophy, might in those days easily enough have visited

many places to satisfy his curiosity and become acquainted with the teaching of various schools of thought. But, on the other hand, much of what has come down to us may have had no other origin than the reference to certain names and places in Plato's own writings. The mention of the philosopher Euclides of Megara, and of the mathematician Theodorus of Cyrene in the *Theætetus*, would alone be sufficient to suggest to the uncritical and inventive biographer a visit to these two eminent persons in their own homes. The humorous oath of Socrates in the *Gorgias* (482 B), "By the dog, the god of the Egyptians," is treated by Olympiodorus as confirming the story of the visit of Plato to Egypt, much in the same manner as that in which fanciful theologians have often "proved" doctrines and established "facts" from stray phrases in the poetical Hebrew Scriptures. With better grounds the reference to Egypt in the *Timæus* (21 D *seq.*) and the *Laws* (ii. 656 D, etc.) might be regarded as evidence; but an Athenian gentleman did not in those days need to go farther than the Piræus in order to meet visitors from strange lands and to hear travellers' tales. In the account given in Diogenes Laertius, Plato does not succeed in meeting the Magians; in Olympiodorus he does, but only in Phœnicia. Already in Herodotus and in the introductory part of Plato's *Timæus* we see how the Greeks were impressed by the long record of the past in Egypt, in comparison with which their own civilisation seemed a thing of yesterday and "the Hellenes always children" (*Tim.* 22 B). With the foundation of Alexandria and the closer contact resulting therefrom between Oriental religion, mysticism and magic

on the one side and Greek science and philosophy on the other, the notion grew up that the Greek sages had learnt their wisdom from the older wisdom of the East—a notion specially encouraged by Jews like Philo, and fixed in a famous phrase by Numenius the Syrian when he described Plato as “Moses speaking Attic.” Plato, we may be certain, did not go to Phœnicia, or some of Diogenes Laertius’s authorities would have got hold of the story. The visit to the Magians may possibly have been suggested by the reference to Zoroaster in the *First Alcibiades* (121 E, 122 A). Plato may, indeed, have gone to Egypt; but if he did not, it was likely enough to have been asserted in the days when Alexandria produced a philosophical school which considered itself Platonic, that he had visited that land of ancient wisdom.

His journeys within the Hellenic world are not open to doubt in the same degree; but we are not entitled to receive Diogenes’s account as certain history. The residence at Megara has been so commonly and firmly accepted as a fact that a great many distinguished German Platonic scholars have been accustomed to speak of a “Megaric” period in Plato’s philosophy immediately succeeding the Socratic and preceding the Pythagorean influence; and the great group of metaphysical dialogues, the *Theætetus*, the *Parmenides*, the *Sophistes*, and the *Politicus*, has been supposed to be the outcome of this personal association with Euclides. Diogenes Laertius gives Hermodorus as his authority for the visit to Megara; and that might seem excellent testimony, for Hermodorus was a pupil of Plato’s own. But, in his account of Euclides, Diogenes quotes Hermodorus as saying that Plato and the other philosophers

came to Euclides after the death of Socrates, "fearing the cruelty of the tyrants" (17). Now, whoever said that showed a very imperfect knowledge of what happened in Athens during Plato's lifetime. It was not "the tyrants," by which we should naturally understand "the Thirty," but the restored democracy, whose wrath the friends of Socrates might have to fear after his death. Again, Cicero, who is our earliest certain authority for Plato's travels (the Platonic *Epistles* being at the best doubtful), says that Plato after the death of Socrates went first to Egypt and afterwards to Italy and Sicily, making no mention of a stay at Megara. It is quite true that a mere visit to Megara, if Cicero had heard of it, might not seem to a Roman worth noticing in comparison with Plato's journeyings to distant lands; but a residence at Megara under philosophical influences which are supposed to have determined a whole group of important writings, could hardly, if known to Cicero, have been passed over in a passage in which he expressly connects the visit to Italy and to Sicily with the Pythagorean influences on Plato's philosophy (18). That Plato was influenced by and that in turn he influenced the Megarian school is probable enough, although we really know very little about these Megarians and their precise relationship to the Eleatics on the one side and to the Socratics on the other. But a residence at Megara was not needed to account for a Megarian element in Plato's thinking. Megara and Athens were within easy distance. A walk to Megara and back was the prescription of a physician who believed in pedestrian exercise (19), and except in time of war there must have been tolerably frequent intercourse between the two

cities. Moreover, the theory which makes the "Megaric" metaphysical dialogues the work of the years immediately following the death of Socrates is doubtful on many grounds. If the various influences upon Plato's philosophical development are always to be traced to personal association with particular philosophers, there would be more reason (as we shall see) for putting the intercourse with Euclides later than the intercourse with the Pythagoreans.

The visits of Plato to Sicily and his unfortunate experience of the friendship of despots seem to rest on a more probable tradition. Grote, accepting the authority of the Alexandrian grammarians⁽²⁰⁾, admits the genuineness of the *Letters* which have come down to us among Plato's works. If the *Letters* were genuine, they would prove the complete certainty of the story about Plato's relationships with Dion and the younger Dionysius. But the *Letters*, some of them almost certainly, and possibly all of them, are a forgery. Yet, even though a forgery, some of them at least are an early forgery, and so they confirm the tradition of the visits to Sicily; for the constructors of such documents, however clumsy in their adaptation of Platonic phrases, however blundering in the details of their chronology, however much they might introduce later notions of a secret doctrine or make the mistake of representing Plato as mainly concerned to understand "Nature," would certainly not have adopted as the historical background of their fiction a story which was not widely diffused and generally accepted. We may therefore take it as almost certain that, by the time the Alexandrian library was founded—some sixty years after Plato's death—the story of the Sicilian

visits was firmly believed. Nor does there seem any improbability in the main outlines of the narrative, nor anything inconsistent with what we know of Plato from his undoubted works. On the contrary, three great dialogues, the *Republic*, the *Statesman* (*Politicus*), and the *Laws*, witness to the persistence in his mind of the ideal of the philosopher guiding political reform; and the descriptions of "the tyrant" in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* may very well owe something to personal suffering in a despot's court. Nothing, however, in the dialogues furnishes any direct evidence of the Sicilian visits; and it is always possible that those passages to which I have referred may have suggested the story to the ever fertile imagination of anecdotal biographers. But an early and undisputed tradition, containing no inherent improbability and much that is consistent with the character and ideals of the person to whom it relates, may be accepted as not more unhistorical than a great deal of what we have by courtesy to call history, when we are dealing with events of which there is no authentic contemporary evidence.

Moreover—and this I think has not been sufficiently noticed—if we can suppose considerable interruptions to Plato's work as a philosophical teacher and writer at Athens, we can more easily account for the remarkable differences in style and thought which separate various groups of his dialogues from one another. If the first visit to Syracuse was between 390 and 387 B.C. (the selling of him as a slave at Ægina, if it actually occurred, must have taken place before the end of the war with Athens), if Plato was teaching in Athens from 387 to 368 and then revisited Sicily,

and if a third voyage was made in 361, we have a chronological scheme into which the various stages of Plato's philosophical history can be conveniently fitted. The great dialogues in which Pythagorean notions mingle with a developed Socratic doctrine (*Phædo*, *Phædrus*, *Republic*) may have been written between 387 and 368, after an acquaintance with Italian philosophers, and before the disillusion due to the disappointed hopes of 367. The year 361 might mark the interval between the great metaphysical dialogues (*Parmenides*, *Sophistes*, *Politicus*, and perhaps *Philebus*) and the *Laws*, the work of Plato's old age. His absence in 361 might also help to account for the independent position which Aristotle took up towards the doctrines of his revered master. But all this is only hypothesis incapable of complete verification.

CHAPTER II

THE PLATONIC WRITINGS

IN the interpretation of a modern philosopher we derive much help from our definite knowledge of the order in which he published his views, and of the circumstances which helped to determine changes in his opinions. We generally know a good deal about the personal and literary influences that acted on his mind. We can trace with tolerable certainty the limits of his acquaintance with previous or contemporary thought. We can tell with a fair degree of accuracy what are the theories he is most anxious to controvert. Even when a modern writer has not availed himself of the now familiar device of footnotes and precise references, we may be able to find out from his correspondence, or from his commonplace book, or from a catalogue of his library, or from the accounts of friends and pupils, what books and subjects were chiefly occupying his mind at any given period. Thus, though the commentator on Kant has a burdensome task, because of the clumsiness of much of Kant's writing, and because of the carelessness with which Kant revised his proofs, and because of the multitude of other commentators, he escapes many of the difficulties that beset the interpreter of Plato and Aristotle. He has

no doubts as to Kant's authorship of the works ascribed to him; he knows the dates at which they were published; he knows when Kant was engaged in writing them, and what he said in his letters at the time. He has no excuse for regarding Kant as the critic of Hume's *Treatise*, because he knows that Kant had only read the *Essays*. He can conclude with almost complete certainty that Kant had no first-hand acquaintance with Berkeley. He can see where Kant is thinking of Newton, or influenced by Rousseau. He learns the channels through which he received his impressions of Leibniz.

In endeavouring to understand the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle we are confronted by a series of literary and historical problems. What works are genuine? In what order were they composed? What are the opinions which Plato is really criticising in this or that passage? What were the relations between Plato and Aristotle, between Aristotle and Plato's successors in the Academy, and how are we to explain the severe criticism of the master by the pupil? Such questions are not merely of philological or historical interest; they must obtrude themselves into any proper attempt to interpret the philosophy, and external evidence fails us almost altogether, or comes from late and untrustworthy sources.

In the matter, indeed, of the genuineness of Plato's writings, fortune and time have dealt kindly with us. We have lost none of the works which were accepted as Plato's in ancient times, and the text on the whole is satisfactory. The Platonic *corpus* errs by excess. Some of the dialogues which have come down under

his name were rejected by the Alexandrian scholars, others were regarded as doubtful; and some modern scholars have questioned the genuineness of works which the ancients accepted. Fortunately, however, very little doubt attaches to any of the more important dialogues. No one can reasonably doubt the genuineness of the *Republic*, which must now always form the centre point of any study of Platonic philosophy, or of the *Timæus*, which so long unduly held that place. Aristotle refers to both of these as Plato's, and Aristotle also attests the genuineness of the *Laws*, which the critics who set up an extreme standard of uniformity of style and doctrine might most easily have rejected. The differences between these three works give us a measure of the proved versatility of Plato. No great question of Platonic philosophy turns on the authenticity of the *First* or *Second Alcibiades*, or of the *Greater* or *Lesser Hippias*; still less on that of slighter works, like the *Ion* or the *Menexenus*, the *Theages* or the *Erastæ*. The only very important question of genuineness is that which has been raised in modern times about the *Parmenides*; and if the *Parmenides* were not Plato's, we should have to reject the *Sophistes* and the *Politicus* also, which both allude to it⁽¹⁾. But the *Politicus* is pretty clearly alluded to and presupposed in Aristotle's *Politics*⁽²⁾, so that we have indirectly the testimony of Aristotle to the *existence* of the *Sophistes*, and therefore of the *Parmenides*, before he wrote his *Politics*. The silence of Aristotle respecting the *Parmenides* and his own relation to it constitute a difficult problem on which something must be said later on. (See Chap. V.)

Grote accepts everything as Plato's which found a

place in the Alexandrian canon, including even the *Epistles*—all of which can hardly be genuine—and the *Epinomis*, which a very credible ancient story ascribed to a pupil of Plato's, the mathematician and astronomer, Philippus of Opus, who is said to have been the editor of the obviously unfinished *Laws*. Grote's belief in the accuracy and infallibility of the Alexandrian grammarians exceeds that of the ancients themselves. The existence of a Platonic school at Athens and the establishment of the Alexandrian library gave no security, as Grote thinks, for a careful discrimination between genuine and spurious works. On the contrary, they supplied a stimulus to imitation and forgery. A school produces writings in the style of the master: a great library and the growing habit of collecting manuscripts give a commercial inducement to the production of imitations.

At the other extreme from Grote, some German scholars have applied to the Platonic writings a standard of uniformity in style and doctrine which seems incompatible with ascribing the *Laws* and the *Republic* (or the *Symposium* or the *Phædrus*) to the same author, and which would prove quite unworkable if applied to any great modern writer whose life had been passed in varied surroundings, and whose literary activity had lasted through a long series of years (e.g. Milton or Goethe). Apart from the question of the *Parmenides* and the connected metaphysical dialogues, reasonable doubt can only apply to small and unimportant works. Allusions more or less explicit in Aristotle's writings show at least his acquaintance with all the greater works of Plato, except the *Parmenides* (3); and, as already said, we seem to have

Aristotle's testimony to the existence of works which presuppose it.

The arrangements of the Platonic writings made by the ingenuity of the ancient critics cannot be regarded as an attempt to deal with the problem of the order of the dialogues in its modern sense. Plato himself suggests the arrangement of some dialogues into trilogies. The *Timæus* and the unfinished *Critias* profess to be continuations of the *Republic*. In the *Republic* itself no hint is given of a sequel; and, because the discourse of *Timæus* is supposed to be held on the day after Socrates had narrated the long discussion on the ideal state (*Tim.* 17 A), it would be absurd to suppose that the work was written soon after the completion of the *Republic*. On the other hand, the *Sophistes* is professedly the first of a group of three, of which the *Statesman* was to be the second and the *Philosopher* the third. The last seems never to have been written. Such suggestions of trilogies were probably enough to start the attempt of Aristophanes, the learned Alexandrian librarian, who arranged many of the dialogues in groups of three. *Republic*, *Timæus*, *Critias* is, of course, the first group. To complete the trilogy which begins with the *Sophistes*, the *Cratylus* is given as the third, though it has no real claim to fulfil Plato's promise. There is, nevertheless, a certain superficial similarity in subject sufficient to mislead a literary and unphilosophical critic. The *Laws* is grouped along with the *Minos*, which deals with the question "What is Law?" and with the *Epinomis*, which is professedly a continuation of the *Laws*. This trilogy proves indeed that in the Alexandrian library, about 250 B.C., the *Minos* and the *Epinomis* were catalogued as Platonic:

it does not prove that they were written by Plato, as Grote supposes. For the other two trilogies of Aristophanes there is less to be said. There is not much reason why the *Theætetus* should have been placed along with the *Euthyphro* and the *Apology*, except that in its closing words Socrates refers to his approaching trial. The fifth trilogy adds the *Epistles* to the *Crito* and the *Phædo*, probably because they refer to the effect of the death of Socrates on Plato's mind and life. The other Platonic writings Aristophanes left unarranged.

Thrasyllus, a scholar of the time of Augustus and Tiberius, arranged all the works ascribed to Plato, except those considered undoubtedly spurious (⁴), in tetralogies. The first group consists of the four dialogues which relate to the last days, trial, and death of Socrates (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phædo*), four dialogues which have always been naturally read in connection with one another. The obviousness of this group does not, however, prove that Plato wrote them all together, nor even that he had thought of them as forming a separate group. The *Phædo* is on a different scale, and belongs to a different stage of thought from the other three works. The apparent naturalness of this group may, however, have suggested the arrangement in tetralogies to Thrasyllus; and the arrangement in sets of four enabled him to distribute the thirty-six works included in his list in nine groups. In the second tetralogy he puts the *Cratylus* and the *Theætetus* along with the *Sophistes* and *Politicus*; and this also is a group that should always be studied in combination. For some of the other tetralogies there is less to be said. The *Parmenides* and *Philebus* are

put along with the *Symposium* and *Phædrus*. The *Euthydemus* and *Protagoras*, which are naturally thought of together, are joined with the *Gorgias* and *Meno*. It is somewhat noteworthy that two tetralogies are entirely made up of what most modern scholars regard as doubtful dialogues, one consisting of the *First* and *Second Alcibiades*, *Hipparchus*, and *Erastæ*, one of the *Greater* and *Lesser Hippias*, *Ion*, and *Menæxenus*. To make Plato's own trilogy of *Republic*, *Timæus*, *Critias* into a tetralogy, Thrasyllus prefixes the apparently unfinished *Cleitophon*, which is either an imitation, or, if by any possibility it is genuine, a very rough draught of the introductory part of the *Republic*. Plato himself seems to have thought of extending his trilogy into a tetralogy by a dialogue which would have been called *Hermocrates* (*Critias*, 108 A). Thrasyllus puts the *Theages*, which deals with the definition of wisdom, before the very natural group, *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, which treat of Temperance, Courage, and Friendship respectively. The trilogy, *Minos*, *Laws*, *Epinomis*, is very artificially supplemented by the addition of the *Epistles*. If the whole scheme be taken merely as an order for reading Plato, and not, as Thrasyllus seems to have said, as the order in which Plato published his works⁽⁵⁾, the arrangement is certainly more reasonable than those adopted in some modern editions.

Schleiermacher, who did so much to revive the genuine study of Plato, was really the first to deal fully with the historical problem of the order in which Plato wrote his works. Although he admitted a Socratic stage in Plato's philosophy, he supposed Plato to have published his dialogues in such an order as to give a

convenient didactic exposition of his system. The fatal defect of this theory is that it implies that, when Plato began to produce his works, he had his system completed in his mind, and that a system adopted between the ages of twenty and thirty was never substantially altered. Mr. Herbert Spencer's chief works have been produced on this plan; but Mr. Spencer was forty years of age when he announced the programme of his "System of Synthetic Philosophy," and the difference between the Platonic dialogues and Mr. Spencer's encyclopædia of scientific generalisations is such as to suggest that they can hardly have been produced on the same principles. The order of Plato's writings should give us the order of the development of Plato's own thinking; and there is nothing in Plato's thinking, as we see it in his own works, to suggest that his opinions would easily crystallise, or that he would hesitate to give up a conclusion reached after elaborate discussion, as he often does within the limits of a single dialogue, and to face the whole problem afresh. It is very fanciful also to suppose, as has sometimes been done, that Plato intended to give a systematic historical picture of the life of Socrates, and that the dialogues which make Socrates a young man (*e.g.* the *Parmenides*) must be the earliest, and that those which deal with the last days of the master must necessarily be later. The dramatic setting of a dialogue has nothing necessarily to do with the period at which it was written. What should we say of a critic who argued that Shakespeare *must* have written his Historical Plays in the order in which the kings reigned?

The external evidence as to the order of Plato's writings is of the slightest. Aristotle tells us that

the *Laws* is later than the *Republic* (*Pol.* ii. 6. § 1), information we could derive from the *Laws* itself (v. 739). There is a story in Diogenes Laertius (⁶), according to which the *Lysis* was written in the lifetime of Socrates; and when Socrates heard Plato reading it, he exclaimed, "By Hercules, what a lot of lies the young fellow is telling about me!" It is not, indeed, impossible that Plato as a young man may have practised writing down conversations of Socrates which he had recently heard, more perhaps in order to clear up his own ideas than in order to preserve an exact historical record. But the anecdote is just one of those things very likely to be invented. Plato could have had no strong reason for writing about Socrates, while he could still talk with him; still less for publishing what he had written. Reading and writing had not yet come to usurp the place of the living word, and Plato's attitude to Socrates was not that of Boswell to Johnson.

Diogenes Laertius (⁷) reports an opinion that the *Phædrus* was the first dialogue to be written, "for its subject has something youthful about it." This statement of date cannot be called evidence: it is only the inference of some frigid or austere critic who thought that the *Phædrus*, with its exuberant discourses on love and friendship, would not have been written except by a youth. As a matter of fact, the main subject of the *Phædrus* is rather rhetoric than love. Moreover, it so happens that the only important piece of absolutely certain evidence as to date which can be discovered in any of the dialogues is to be found in the *Symposium* (193 A). Plato, with an audacious anachronism, makes Aristophanes at the banquet

allude to an event that took place long after the death of Socrates, the breaking up of Mantinea into villages by the Lacedæmonians. This occurred in 385 B.C., so that "the erotic discourse" (as Aristotle calls it) must have been written when Plato was at least forty-two years of age. There seems no necessity for putting the *Phædrus* earlier; and the *Phædrus* seems to contain an allusion to the *Panegyricus* of Isocrates, and was probably therefore not written before 380 B.C. (⁸); so that the arguments for its very early date because of its subject, or, as many moderns have thought, because of its style, cannot be regarded as sound.

With regard to the *Laws* we have the story (⁹), already referred to, that it was copied out from Plato's waxen tablets by Philippus of Opus, and that he was the author of the supplementary work—the *Epinomis*. That the *Laws* was the work of Plato's latest years, and that it was left unfinished and "edited" after Plato's death, might indeed have been inferred from internal evidence.

From the account which Aristotle gives of the philosophy of Plato, and from the general probabilities of the case, we should expect that the earliest writings of Plato would be those in which he was most directly and immediately under the influence of Socrates. The *Apology* is generally held to be more strictly historical in character than any other work of Plato, and it was probably written soon after the death of Socrates. It is impossible to determine with certainty whether any of the smaller dialogues in which Socrates is represented as searching for the definition of some ethical terms, exactly as he is described in the less dramatic

“Recollections” of Xenophon, were or were not written before the *Apology*. In any case we may safely assign such simple Socratic discourses as the *Charmides*, the *Laches*, the *Lysis* to the earliest period of Plato’s literary activity. The discussion on “piety” in the *Euthyphro* is supposed to take place just before the trial of Socrates; and this dialogue, as well as the *Crito*, in which Socrates refuses to escape from prison, on the ground that he is bound by contract to obey the laws of Athens, may be regarded as parts of the Platonic defence of the memory of Socrates.

At the other end of Plato’s literary life we have the *Laws*, in which Socrates is not introduced at all, and the cosmological *Timæus*, and its sequel the unfinished *Critias*, in which he listens to the discourses of others. We have thus the earliest or purely Socratic group and the latest or non-Socratic group as standards by which to judge the relative dates of the other dialogues. Most readers of Plato would certainly place the *Gorgias*, *Phædo*, and *Republic* in a middle period, exhibiting the greatest literary perfection, and occupying a philosophical position in many ways intermediate between the Socratic and the non-Socratic groups. The *Symposium* and the *Phædrus* seem, in respect of literary excellence and philosophical influences, to belong to the same general period as the *Republic*, and, as we have seen, the *Symposium* cannot have been written before 385 B.C., though probably soon after, and the *Phædrus* with less certainty may be placed after 380 B.C.

Another homogeneous group of dialogues is constituted by the *Parmenides*, *Sophistes*, *Politicus*, all more approaching the technical metaphysical manner

of Aristotle than the ethical conversations of Socrates. The *Sophistes* and *Politicus* belong to an intended trilogy; the *Sophistes* contains a pretty clear allusion to the *Parmenides* and perhaps also an allusion to the *Theætetus* (*Soph.* 253 c; cf. *Theæt.* 172 D). All these four dialogues seem to show a dominant "Megaric" and Eleatic influence, as contrasted with the Pythagorean influence, which is strongly marked in the group of which the *Republic* is the centre. Now the great and most important question respecting the order of the Platonic writings, the question upon which must depend our interpretation of the development of Plato's theory of knowledge, is this: Are the *Republic* and the *Phædo* earlier or later than the group containing the *Parmenides* and the *Sophistes*? In the *Sophistes* and the *Politicus*, Socrates is present, but the discussion is carried on, not by him, but by an "Eleatic Stranger." In the *Parmenides*, Socrates as a young man is criticised by the aged Parmenides, who is the leading speaker of the dialogue. This alone might seem to suggest that these works belong to a time when Plato felt himself less under the direct influence of Socrates than when he wrote the *Republic* and the *Phædo*. In the *Theætetus*, indeed, which in any case must be earlier, and may be several years earlier than the *Sophistes*, Socrates is still the chief speaker; but the dialogue is negative and tentative, and is in form a search for a definition of knowledge on the Socratic plan, though seeming to indicate a specially Megaric influence, Euclides being the narrator of the Socratic discussion. The *Philebus* has affinities with this group of dialogues and comes very near to Aristotle in its metaphysics. But Socrates is the chief speaker, prob-

ably because the professed subject is ethical—the place of pleasure in the rank of good things. The *Philebus* must be pronounced the least artistic of Plato's works; and possibly, like the *Laws*, it may have been left, though to a less extent, unfinished.

We have already seen on what a slender foundation rests the notion of many German scholars, that these great metaphysical dialogues were written during a supposed residence of Plato at Megara soon after the death of Socrates. Of course other arguments than the story of the visit to Euclides might be used for placing the "Megaric" group between the simple tentative Socratic dialogues and the more elaborate and systematic works, such as the *Republic*, *Phædo*, and *Timæus*. It might be urged that Plato's philosophical development was a continuous advance from criticism to construction, the criticism deepening in character and dealing with harder problems under the influences, however received, of Megaric and Eleatic philosophy, the system-making of the later period showing a decided Pythagorean impress, which may naturally be connected with Plato's visits to Sicily and Magna Græcia, and passing over into dogmatism in the *Laws*. There might also seem a certain plausibility, if regard be had merely to subject-matter, in making the *Laws* follow the *Republic* at not too great an interval. Some of those who have adopted this order of the dialogues are able to give a certain qualified acceptance to the old statement about the *Phædrus* being the first dialogue. They make it the first publication of Plato's when he had established himself as a philosophical teacher in the Academy: it is Plato's "inaugural programme"—a phrase which paints Plato

too much in the character of a German professor, with the background of an established university system. When we look more into details, many difficulties suggest themselves in Hermann's arrangement of the dialogues. Why is Socrates deprived of the leading part in the "critical" *Sophistes* and *Politicus*, to recover it again completely in the "constructive" *Republic* and *Phædo*? Why is he criticised so severely in the first part of the *Parmenides*, and silent during the dialectic argument of the second part? It might indeed be answered, that Plato's years of travel led him for a time away from Socrates, but that, when he returned to Athens, Socrates regained prominence in his thoughts, but transfigured in the light of Plato's increased knowledge and experience into the ideal prophet of a new philosophy at once critical and constructive, to be put aside again only for the Pythagorean cosmologist of the *Timæus*, and for the unnamed Athenian of the *Laws*, who seems to signify Plato himself. But other objections are not so easily met: how is it that the *Politicus* approaches more closely to Aristotle's *Politics* than the *Republic* does in its classification of constitutions, and seems in many respects intermediate between the *Republic* and the *Laws*? A still greater difficulty is that raised by the *Parmenides*. The theory of ideas which is there criticised is not to be found in any of the dialogues which Hermann places earlier⁽¹⁰⁾; on the other hand, it is the very theory maintained in the *Phædo* and the *Republic*, which Hermann places later. It is not incredible that Plato should have criticised a theory and afterwards adopted it in a modified form: this is what he is often doing within the compass of a

single dialogue. But it does seem incredible that Plato should criticise a theory with extreme acuteness and severity, and afterwards adopt it in the very form criticised, and without any suggested means of obviating the objections. We have, moreover, no warrant for assuming a continuous movement in Plato's thinking from the negative and critical to the positive and constructive. It is more in accordance with the dialectic process, which we find exemplified within the limits of single dialogues, to suppose that the cruder and slighter methods of dealing with problems are, after important objections have been raised, replaced by subtler and more elaborate discussions.

The general question of artistic excellence and literary form is one on which it is difficult to pronounce with certainty. The appeal, in the last resort, is to the feeling of the critic. But it does certainly seem strange that the dry, technical manner of the *Sophistes*, *Politicus*, *Parmenides* should intervene between the *Protagoras* on the one side and the *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Phædo*, and *Republic* on the other. To escape the arbitrary judgments of the æsthetic critic, scholars have, especially in recent years, adopted the laborious but objective and impersonal method of noting the points of agreement and difference between various dialogues and groups of dialogues in respect of vocabulary and grammatical forms. What gives a peculiar interest and value to these investigations is that they have been carried on to a great extent independently by different scholars, and yet they have on the whole yielded results all tending in the same general direction. Professor Lewis Campbell, in his edition of the *Sophistes* and *Politicus* in

1867, discovered that in respect of vocabulary and certain peculiarities of style and grammar these dialogues bore a greater resemblance to the *Laws*, admittedly the last of Plato's works, than to the *Republic* ⁽¹¹⁾. Unaware of Professor Campbell's researches, various German scholars have minutely investigated other matters of style. Thus it has been noted that avoidance of hiatus is a characteristic of *Soph.*, *Pol.*, *Phileb.*, *Tim.*, *Critias*, *Leg.*, while all kinds of hiatus are frequent in the *Republic*. Similar results have been reached in respect of the use of particles of transition, and other such matters of style as admit of exact quantitative comparison. A full account of the whole series of investigations is given in M. Lutoslawski's *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*. By combining the results of stylometric observation with such slight historical allusions as can be detected in some of the dialogues, M. Lutoslawski considers that the main problem of the order of the Platonic writings is now solved. The results obtained in this way seem to me certainly to yield an arrangement of the dialogues which fits in with the most probable hypothesis (of course it cannot be more than an hypothesis) about the development of Plato's philosophical thought, and also, as already indicated (see above, p. 17), with the slight knowledge we can obtain about the outward events of his life. A chronological arrangement of all the dialogues in the order of writing or of publication must certainly be regarded as unattainable; partly because "publication" cannot have meant anything so definite to Plato as it does to us since the days of printing, or even as it did after the foundation of the Alexandrian library and the growth of a cos-

mopolitan "reading public." There is no reason why Plato may not have worked simultaneously at several compositions, and occasionally remodelled or enlarged a dialogue or parts of a dialogue already read aloud to his friends or circulated among them. But while a minute chronology is impossible, the order of the main groups of Plato's writings can no longer be regarded as an insoluble problem. We can at least judge of greater or less probability; and the balance of probability seems to me entirely in favour of placing the group to which the *Parmenides* and *Sophistes* belong after the group of which the *Republic* is the centre. In the account which I shall give of Plato's philosophy I shall therefore assume that his dialogues may be arranged as follows:—

I. First, there is what we may call the specially "Socratic" dialogues, in which the views maintained by Plato's Socrates do not contain anything inconsistent with those maintained by the Socrates of Xenophon. The *Apology*, the *Crito*, the *Euthyphro*, the *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Lysis* all clearly belong to this group. The *Protagoras* belongs to the later portion of it, and the *Euthydemus* and the *Meno* seem to give indications of a considerable development in philosophical theory. Indeed, it is just possible that the *Euthydemus* belongs to a much later stage. Minor difficulties of that sort do not affect the main question of Platonic interpretation. It is worth noticing that all the admittedly spurious dialogues, and also those about which there is considerable doubt, with the notable exception of the *Greater Hippias*, belong to the same philosophical type as these smaller "Socratic" dialogues.

This first group we may assign to the years between the death of Socrates (399 B.C.) and Plato's first visit to Sicily, whence he must have returned in 387 B.C.

II. After his return to Athens and the commencement of his career as a philosophical teacher, we have the great group of dialogues which are the most finished and perfect in literary form (*Phaedr.*, *Rep.*, etc.). This group we may call "Socratic-Platonic." Socrates is still the central figure: his personal characteristics are maintained and dramatically represented. But doctrines are put into his mouth which we have Aristotle's authority for considering not to be Socratic, but Pythagorean or else peculiar to Plato. According to this arrangement of the dialogues Plato reaches the culmination of his literary greatness between his fortieth and sixtieth years.

III. The second voyage to Sicily in 368 B.C. or 367 B.C. interrupts his teaching and writing. In Sicily he is disillusioned as to the possibility of realising his political ideals with the help of the younger Dionysius; and we may perhaps conjecture that he may have found more congenial society among some survivors of the Eleatic school. He returns, prepared to admit that much of his philosophical thinking may have to be done over again: he is sobered and saddened, but he has not become a "misologist." He does not despair of philosophy; and his circle has been enriched by the arrival of his greatest pupil, "the reader," or "the intellect of the school," as Plato is said to have called the young Aristotle. To the period between 367 and 361 we can assign the great metaphysical dialogues, the *Theatetus* (though that may possibly have been written or begun before 367), the

Parmenides, the *Sophistes*, and the *Politicus*—the group which may, if we like, be called Megaric, though “Eleatic” would be a more suitable description of the last three. If Plato intended, as his words seem to imply, to add a third dialogue, “The Philosopher,” to the group of “The Sophist” and “The Statesman,” we may suppose that his third departure for Sicily interrupted his scheme.

IV. To the last period of Plato's life, when he was over sixty-seven or sixty-eight years of age, we may assign the *Philebus*, which is strangely abrupt and irregular in its transitions (as ancient critics seem already to have noticed)⁽¹²⁾, the *Timæus*, its sequel the *Critias*, which is merely begun, and the *Laws*, which according to tradition was edited and published by a pupil, Philippus of Opus. We need not be surprised at Plato's great literary activity in these last years. He was a man of great bodily vigour, and his full mental powers developed slowly and lasted long. After many years of teaching and discussion he must have felt full of matter and anxious to put it down before death came, without always exercising the scrupulous artistic care shown in his earlier works. Avoidance of hiatus and a certain rhetorical flow had been made the literary fashion of the age, and do not imply the same time and effort spent over a work as must have gone to the composition of dialogues like the *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, or *Republic*.

Of course it is also possible that the *Philebus* or the *Timæus* may belong to the period before 361. The *Philebus* has many characteristics which make it a fitting sequel to the Eleatic group, though it shows also Pythagorean influences absent in them, but predominant

in the *Timæus* and important in the *Laws*. If all, except the *Laws*, could be placed before 361, we might suppose that Plato's third journey to Sicily accounted for the fragmentary nature of the *Critias* and the want of finish in the *Philebus*. But the exact dates of these later dialogues cannot perhaps be precisely fixed, and the question is really unimportant. We have no reason to suppose that Plato always finished, or intended to finish, one work before beginning another. Many causes might account for the *Critias* being left a fragment. Perhaps, feeling that every year was bringing him nearer to silence, Plato may have purposely turned aside from his great vision of the triumphs of an ideal society to the practical task of bringing some remedies to the pressing evils of his own age. The *Laws* is clearly Plato's last work: its ethical and religious exhortations are the message which he felt Hellas most needed from the accumulated thought and experience of nearly four-score years.

CHAPTER III

PLATO AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

THE problem of the order of Plato's writings has been spoken of in the preceding chapter as the problem of the development of Plato's philosophical system. The question may, however, be asked: Has Plato any system at all? Does he not in each dialogue face some philosophical difficulty from an independent point of view, and can we expect to find a system, or the growth of a system, in a writer of this kind? Now it is certainly important to remember that any exposition of Plato's philosophy, as if it were a system in the sense in which we speak of the Cartesian or the Hegelian philosophies, involves some want of historical perspective, some artificial rearrangement of the material, some crystallisation of what was fluid. Even Aristotle has not the same idea of system, which, since the days of his commentators, ancient and mediæval, has become traditional to us—to Frenchmen and Germans perhaps more than to Englishmen. And Plato's method of working out and expressing his thoughts in the form of dialogue removes him still further from the manner and habits of the system-makers of modern times. The Platonic dialogue has been well compared to the modern essay ⁽¹⁾. But Plato is not a mere man of letters, with

a dilettante interest in metaphysical and ethical questions among other things, and a contented acquiescence in the difficulty, or even the hopelessness, of obtaining certainty on the most fundamental matters. He is not satisfied with sceptical common-sense, nor with agnosticism tempered by æsthetic sympathies for impossible beliefs. He has always before him the ideal of "the whole," and it is just his passion for truth—truth, which must be one and indivisible, must be coherent—that makes him untiring in the effort to grasp it, and ready to criticise and reject every partial or inadequate solution. As already said, it is absurd to set up for writings distributed over some fifty years a standard of rigid uniformity in thought and expression. To do so would imply a poor opinion of Plato's mind. Yet we are not therefore compelled to accept the other extreme view—that there is no continuity or consistency in Plato's reflections and criticisms. The more reasonable hypothesis is to assume that Plato does not mean to think incoherently, and only to adopt the supposition of a complete change of opinion and a clear inconsistency between earlier and later doctrine, where no other theory will satisfactorily explain the facts.

The form of dialogue was not chosen, as by later writers who were following Plato's example, because it provided a convenient device for answering the objections that might be or had been raised against a philosophical theory already adopted and formulated. Plato inherits the form of dialogue from the conversations of Socrates as the proper method for testing current opinions and arriving at truth if possible ⁽²⁾. "Dialectic" (*τὸ διαλέγεσθαι*) at first simply means conversation

or discussion, but it comes to acquire a more precise signification. Zeno of Elea had employed the method of question and answer in order to expose inconsistencies⁽³⁾, and even in the simpler Socratic dialogues of Plato there is the underlying assumption that the conversation is not being carried on at random, on the chance of this or that person making a happy hit or guess at the truth. There are rules of the game. The respondent is expected to answer "Yes" or "No." This of course gives great opportunity to the questioner of securing an easy apparent triumph, if he chooses to word his questions in forms which are really complex. But, with intelligent and alert respondents, or with a questioner who will himself make distinctions in his questions, it is an admirable method of detecting the concealed contradictions that lurk in ordinary opinions, or in the oracular sayings of the poets: it may be used also to bring out the implicit thought involved in sound beliefs which have not before been analysed, and so to reveal to the person holding them principles and consequences of which he was not aware. The dialectician, according to one of Plato's definitions, is "he who knows how to ask questions and to answer them" (*Cratyl.* 390 c). But as the need of distinctions comes to be more and more recognised as the important thing, if truth is to be got at by this method of asking questions, "dialectic" (τὸ διαλέγεσθαι) is distinguished from the mere art of controversy or disputation (τὸ ἐρίζειν) by the habit of distinguishing the subject investigated according to its kinds (κατ' εἶδη διαιρούμενοι τὸ λεγόμενον ἐπισκοπεῖν, *Rep.* v. 454 A). The Sophist, Euthydemus, in the dialogue named after him (295 D), gets very angry with Socrates for drawing distinctions (διαστέλλοντι τὰ λεγόμε-

μενα) which interfere with his verbal victories. But this business of distinguishing, dividing, classifying (διαίσεις), so as to arrive at the true kinds or forms (εἶδη = "ideas") of things, gradually bulks more and more in Plato's mind, and the conversation or dialogue becomes more a traditional or customary manner of exposition and less of the essence of the method. Especially in long dialogues like the *Republic* the answers tend to be rather monotonous responses, even though the Greek language admits of so many lively ways of saying "Yes" and "No." The Socrates of the dialogues becomes more of the teacher or lecturer and less of the inquirer till he falls into the background, to make way for the Eleatic stranger, the Pythagorean cosmologist, or the Athenian lawgiver. In the *Theætetus* (189 E) it is recognised that dialectic may be carried on within the mind: question and answer and criticism do not necessarily require a company or even two. In the *Sophistes* (263 E) the question is asked: "Are not thought and speech the same?" The way is prepared for solitary meditation and systematic lecturing as the methods of philosophical thought and expression, though Plato himself never entirely departs from the Socratic tradition, save in lengthening enormously the speeches of the leading person. Even the *Timæus* has a conversational introduction. Dialectic conceived in this way as the systematic study of things, so as to discover their real affinities and differences, is "the coping stone of the sciences" (*Rep.* vii. 534 E): it is a higher activity of mind than the reasoning employed in the mathematical sciences, where certain assumptions have always to be made (*Rep.* vi. 510 B-511 E). It is a "roundabout progress through

all things" (*Parm.* 136 E) by which the mind seeks to see the one in the many and the many in the one, dividing things according to their true nature and not hacking them like a bad carver (*Phædr.* 265 E, 266 A, B). We can trace a growth in Plato's conception of dialectic from the simple Socratic questioning to the ideal of a complete classificatory system and a logical grasp of the whole, in which we move from idea to idea without any of the assumptions of the special sciences.

Sextus Empiricus ⁽⁴⁾ says that Plato implicitly, or potentially, introduced the division of philosophy into Physics, Ethics, and Logic—the philosophy of nature, of human conduct and society, and of thought—by devoting dialogues specially to one or other of these branches. This division of philosophy is that afterwards adopted by the Stoics. Through them it has gained wide currency, and, in any case, it supplies us with convenient heads under which to discuss Plato's views, provided that we do not leave out of sight the likelihood of development of doctrine or change of opinion. Aristotle, always our best and often our only safe guide to the interpretation of Plato, has told us in the *Metaphysics* (i. 6) of the various philosophical influences which determined Plato's thought; and if we supplement these with the little we know about his life, and with the faint indications we find in his writings, we may attempt to give some account of his attitude at different times to the problems of thought, nature, and man, as these came to him from his predecessors and contemporaries.

Aristotle tells us (*Met.* i. 6) that Plato from a youth was familiar with Cratylus and the opinions of Heraclitus. Of this, indeed, we find no trace in the smaller

dialogues; but in the naming and the subject-matter of the *Cratylus* (cf. especially 401 D-402 B) we have Plato's own indication of this Heraclitean influence co-operating with that of Socrates⁽⁵⁾. From Aristotle (*Met.* r 5, 1010a, 13) we learn that the real Cratylus pushed the doctrine of the fleeting nature of things to an extreme of paradox. Heraclitus had said, "You cannot step twice into the same river." "Not even once," said Cratylus. How then can we assert anything about anything? In the moment of our assertion, it becomes false. And so Cratylus argued that we could not assert anything at all, and "moved his finger"—to point instead of speaking, perhaps also to hint that "all moves." In the *Theatetus* Plato suggests that the Heraclitean doctrine of flux is implied in the saying of the Sophist Protagoras, "Man is the measure of all things," which he takes as if it meant an absolute relativity of knowledge to this or that individual, and this would mean the impossibility of anything that can properly be called knowledge, everything being as it seems to anyone at the moment, so that there is no fixity, no objective standard for judging anything true or false. Plato need not be taken necessarily to mean that there was any actual historical link between the Heraclitean doctrine about the nature of things, which was intended to be a cosmological doctrine without any clear consciousness of the logical problems implicit in the theory, and the vague scepticism suggested by the popular teacher, who called attention to the subjective factor in all professed knowledge. Plato is always less concerned with historical affiliations than with the logical connections of ideas and institutions. Still, it seems likely enough that, in the age of the

Sophists, an age when philosophy was being popularised, the philosophic doubt of the educated man of the world, and of the clever lecturer who taught him, should find support in such sayings of the deep and dark Ephesian as had caught hold of men's minds in Ionia and elsewhere. In any case we may suppose Plato to have had his thoughts awakened out of the placid slumber of the ordinary commonplace acceptance of current beliefs before he came under the influence of Socrates. He had asked himself, How can any knowledge be possible? Can we really *know* anything at all? He had experienced the wonder, and perhaps the horror, of a universal doubt, before he became one of the circle who found a guide and a help in the converse and character of Socrates.

Socrates had turned away from the cosmological speculations of earlier philosophy: his questions were all about human conduct. Socrates had apparently given some attention to the various philosophies of nature in his younger days (cf. Plato's *Phaedo*, 96 A-D); and Aristophanes, when he caricatured him, may have had some excuse for representing him as occupied with physical theories, though of course it is always most convenient on the stage to exhibit the philosopher as a person who deals with visible and tangible things. The *Clouds* was produced when Plato was a child of four (423 B.C.). By the time that Plato came in contact with Socrates, the master was occupied solely with ethics, not, however, in the sense that he was a preacher of duties, or a spiritual director who assumed that questions of right and wrong were absolutely certain, while those of mathematics and physics were all unsettled. Socrates was fully con-

scious of a theoretical problem, and, in his inquiries about moral matters, he was laying the foundations of a science of logic, of which there did not as yet exist any definite idea, and which for a long time to come was not to have any accepted name. When people talked of "just" and "noble," "unjust" and "ignoble," praising or blaming persons and deeds, Socrates insisted on asking them to explain such words. The average man thinks he understands them because he is always using them. Ask people what they mean by courage, self-control, justice, wisdom, piety, friendship: they will perhaps begin by giving you some examples or illustrations. They have a picture before their imagination of certain cases, and they think that that is a knowledge of the subject. Tell them you do not want a list of just persons or examples of famous friendships, but want to know what justice is in itself, what friendship is in itself: they will very likely quote a text on the subject, some proverbial saying or some famous line from a sacred poet, some verses they have learnt at school. Such answers do not satisfy Socrates. He professes great reverence for the inspired words of the poet; but when it is difficult to reconcile a literal application of the traditional doctrine with what have come to be our practical beliefs about right and wrong, we can always suppose that we have misunderstood the text, or that the fault lies with the interpreters⁽⁶⁾. This is a quietly ironical way of escaping from the tyranny of the written word or the infallible wisdom of the past. Socrates is not content unless he can obtain a definition of justice or temperance or friendship that will fit every case. It must be general or

universal in character. His method of arriving at this is to take numerous instances by which to test any definition that is put forward. This is the Socratic *ἐπαγωγή* (i.e. "bringing forward" or "leading on") (7)—commonly translated "Induction," but apt to be misunderstood if supposed to mean Induction in the sense of Bacon or Mill. Socrates did not propose to get at ethical definitions by generalising from all the particulars, which we could only do if we already knew the general in the particular. He starts with some traditional opinion, and then proceeds to test it by taking concrete instances, and seeing whether they come under the accepted formula.

This is the Socratic method which is illustrated in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Plato's smaller dialogues, such as the *Charmides* and *Laches*. The method is obviously inapplicable beyond the range of the questions to which it is here applied; and the tentative or approximate solutions of Socrates suggest further problems of which Socrates himself may never have thought. Suppose we get our universal definition of "the just" or "the beautiful," suppose that in the same way we get a universal definition of "greatness" or "smallness," or even of "horse" and "man," what after all is the thing we are then speaking about? The concrete particular horse, big, black, beautiful, in a particular place at a particular time,—that we can perceive and we might regard it as real, if it were not for the doubt which the Heracliteans have raised that all the world we know through the senses is a mere fleeting appearance. But what is "*the* horse" which the scientific man talks about, and which alone he can define? What is "the just" and "the beauti-

ful?" Does it in any sense exist, and how? Nay, is not this universal more real and more permanent than the particular, or rather, the only real and eternal as distinct from the fleeting things of sense? The science of mathematics seems to help us here. The triangle or circle which the geometrician draws, or that which the carpenter or smith may make in wood or iron, is not the true triangle or circle, but only an imperfect representation or copy of it. The true triangle or circle is the perfect triangle of which the geometrician thinks and speaks, though his bodily eyes may be fixed on some imperfect diagram as a mere help and symbolic suggestion to his mind. Now may it not be so everywhere? What we really know, what we can think, is the universal type; what we see, touch, hear, etc., is something deceptive and illusory if we take it for truly real: it is real only in so far as it partakes in, or manifests to us, or resembles the universal type.

In some such way we may suppose Plato's doctrine of Ideas to have been gradually formed in his mind through continued reflection on the Socratic method, and by new applications of it. Aristotle treats it as a development of the Socratic search for universal concepts; but he distinguishes it in certain respects from what Socrates himself really held. Even Xenophon (*Mem.* iv. 5. § 12) describes the dialectic of Socrates as the discussion of things "according to their kinds" (*κατὰ γένη*), or the inquiry as to "what is" in each case (*ibid.* 6. § 1); and this agrees with what Aristotle tells us (*Met.* M 4. § 9, 1078b, 25)⁽⁸⁾. It is the central characteristic of Plato's theory of knowledge to recognise that the object of real knowledge or science must be the universal, the kind (*γένος* or *εἶδος*): this

is the true nature, the "what it is" of a thing; and this central characteristic is the doctrine of Socrates himself. In the *Metaphysics* (M 9. § 35, 1086b, 2 seq.) Aristotle expressly says that Socrates set agoing (ἐκίνησε) this doctrine—this recognition that the object of science must be a permanent and a universal—by his definitions, but Socrates did not "separate" (οὐ μὲν ἐχώρισε) these universals from particular things, and so he escaped the difficulties which arise from the Platonic doctrine of the separate existence of the ideas. Thus Aristotle recognises a Socratic and a non-Socratic element in the Platonic theory. The non-Socratic he traces mainly to Pythagorean influences. In the first book of the *Metaphysics* he speaks of the resemblance of the Platonic philosophy in many respects to the "Italic" (*Met.* A 6. § 1, 987a, 30). Under this name he seems, indeed, to include both the Pythagoreans and the Eleatics; the two schools are discussed together in the preceding passage, and there seems to have been an historical connection between them⁽⁹⁾. But in what he says about Plato he lays most stress on the Pythagorean element.

Aristotle looks upon the Platonic doctrine—not of the recognition of universals in some sense, for that is Socratic—but the doctrine of the relation of the world of sense to the ideas as substantially identical with the Pythagorean doctrine of the relation of phenomena to numbers, or we should perhaps rather say, to geometrical figures; for the Greeks with their imperfect system of notation had to work out all difficult arithmetical problems geometrically. (We still speak of the "square" and the "cube" of numbers—a survival of this geometrical arithmetic.) Plato says sensible things "par-

ticipate in ideas"; the Pythagoreans had said, "things imitate numbers." Plato only "changes the word" (*Met.* A 6. § 5, 987b, 10). Now, it might be urged, we cannot take this as direct evidence that Plato consciously borrowed a Pythagorean doctrine: it may only be a recognition by Aristotle of the inner logical affinity of two independently formulated theories. It has even been suggested that the "so-called Pythagoreans," as Aristotle knew them, owed more to Plato than Plato to them⁽¹⁰⁾. But when we turn to the dialogues in which the Platonic theory of knowledge reaches a stage of development distinctly beyond what, on the combined testimony of Xenophon and Aristotle, we can ascribe to the real Socrates, we are struck by the fact that these very dialogues show traces of Pythagorean influence in other respects, traces which do not appear in the earlier, more purely Socratic dialogues. Thus the *Meno* contains a more developed theory of knowledge than the *Protagoras*; but the *Meno* also contains the doctrine of "recollection," which implies the Pythagorean notion of pre-existence and metempsychosis. The *Gorgias* again has sometimes been spoken of as representing "the transition from the Socratic to the peculiar Platonic philosophy"⁽¹¹⁾; and in the *Gorgias* we find justice explained in mathematical language as a proportion (508 A)—almost certainly a Pythagorean suggestion. Again, we are told that philosophers say the world is a "Cosmos" (508 A)—a term first applied to the universe by the Pythagoreans. The saying that "the body is a tomb" (σῶμα σήμα) is ascribed to some "Sicilian or Italian" (493 A); and the allusion is perhaps rather to the Pythagoreans than to Empedocles⁽¹²⁾. The

Phædo and the *Republic*, which most clearly contain the doctrine criticised by Aristotle of the separation of the Ideas from the world of sense, have both of them a Pythagorean cosmology as the background of their visions of another life. In the *Phædo*, moreover, Phædo narrates the discourse of Socrates preparing for death to Echecrates, who is named among the "last of the Pythagoreans" of that period⁽¹³⁾; and Simmias and Cebes, who carry on the conversation with Socrates, are said to have associated with Philolaus, the most eminent of the Pythagorean school (61 D). This looks like a very distinct acknowledgment of Pythagorean influence. In the *Republic* we find the only mention (so far as I know) of Pythagoras himself that occurs in the Platonic writings (x. 600 B). Pythagoras is said to have instituted "a way of life," *i.e.* a rule for his brotherhoods; and there can be little doubt that these brotherhoods or religious societies were among the models after which Plato constructed his ideal state. The saying with which Plato introduces his proposed abolition of private property, "Friends have all things in common" (*Rep.* iv. 424 A, v. 449 C), is said to have been Pythagorean⁽¹⁴⁾. Plato extends to a whole state, or at least to the whole ruling caste, definite rules of life such as Pythagoras had applied to private societies within the state, which came, however (like some religious orders of later times), to exercise great political influence. The Pythagoreans, again, are expressly referred to in connection with the subject of the study of harmony (*Rep.* vii. 530 D). The importance assigned to mathematics in the scheme of education, and the use made of them as a stepping-stone to the understanding of the Ideas, are an implicit admission of Pythagorean

influence. In the *Timæus*, the only work in which Plato elaborates a philosophy of nature, the whole discourse is put into the mouth of a Pythagorean (though Plato has not followed Pythagorean doctrines without modifications of his own), and Socrates listens in silence except for one approving interruption (29 D). Now all these dialogues, with the exception perhaps of the *Meno*, must be placed later than Plato's first voyage to Sicily, from which he returned in 387 B.C. The *Timæus* must be placed after the second or after the third voyage. Are we not, then, sufficiently entitled to say that Plato's tendency to assign to the universals or kinds, which are alone the objects of scientific knowledge, an existence seemingly separate and independent from the things of sense is a doctrine due to this Pythagorean influence supplementing Socratic dialectic? The employment of numbers or geometrical figures to explain, not merely the physical universe, but the principles of ethics and politics, the exaltation of a religious conception of the wise man's life as something higher than the ordinary duties of citizenship in his earthly city, the delight in visions of a world invisible to the eye of sense,—these seem somewhat alien to the practical ethics of Socrates, or rather they show a meeting of two currents in Plato's thought, a Pythagorean stream sweeping him farther than the Socratic influence alone would have carried him. Plato saw, indeed, what the Pythagoreans had not seen, that the numbers and geometrical figures with which the mathematician deals are abstract, *i.e.* they are not concrete, sensible things, but must be thought of as existing separate from and apart from the sensible things which imperfectly "imitate" them and can only be scien-

tifically understood by means of them. This abstract character of the objects of mathematical thinking is transferred by Plato in this middle stage of his philosophical development to *all* the objects of scientific thought, and thus we have the doctrine of *abstract* Ideas in place of the mere Socratic assertion that knowledge is of universals. It was precisely because of this abstractness of mathematics that Plato held the study of them to be the necessary preparation for philosophy (*Rep.* vii. 522 *seq.*)⁽¹⁵⁾.

At the same time the influence of Socrates himself on Plato should not be underestimated. Whilst Plato felt it inappropriate to put the cosmology of the *Timæus* or the technical metaphysics of the *Sophistes* and *Politicus* into the mouth of Socrates, he clearly did not feel it dramatically unfitting to assign to his Socrates the subtle arguments of the *Phædo*, the *Theætetus*, and the *Philebus*, the paradoxes of the *Republic*, and the flights of exuberant fancy of the *Symposium* and the *Phædrus*. How far Plato goes beyond the possible utterances of the actual Socrates we can only discover by conjecture; but it is very uncritical to assume, as is too often done, that Xenophon gives the full measure of his master's greatness. Xenophon's interests and those of Socrates were, as it has been ingeniously put, only intersecting circles, intersecting in a small part of their area, whereas the circle of Plato expands round the whole circle of Socrates⁽¹⁶⁾. Xenophon was a soldier, a country gentleman, a sportsman who thought hunting a better education than listening to the conversations of the Sophists⁽¹⁷⁾; he was absent from Athens during the last years of Socrates; he wrote his *Memorabilia* with the express

purpose of proving to the average conservative, superstitious Athenian that Socrates was an orthodox believer and a good citizen. He had every inducement to suppress or to minimise any reference to the more startling or paradoxical utterances of the strange old man, even if such utterances had ever awakened the interest of Xenophon himself. A man's associates receive different impressions of him according to the make of their own minds. Even the same conversation, if conscientiously and carefully reported soon after it has taken place, will be reported with varying emphasis by different hearers. If Socrates had been nothing but the rather prosaic moraliser whom Xenophon depicts, a sort of mixture of Dr. Johnson and the Rev. Mr. Barlow, not only is it difficult to understand the dislike and fear he excited at Athens, but his place in the intellectual history of the world becomes unintelligible. Antisthenes the Cynic and Aristippus the Cyrenaic both belonged to his circle, and each could claim some support for his own ideal of life from the audacious independence and unconventionality of Socrates. The dialectical Megarics owed something to the dialectic of Zeno the Eleatic, but they belong also to the Socratic group. Plato, we may be sure, understood more fully the mind of the master than these "one-sided Socratics," and from Plato comes Aristotle and the later Academy and Neo-Platonism. Cynic and Cyrenaic reappear as Stoic and Epicurean; so that all the schools which divided the later Hellenic and Roman worlds may be said in some sense to trace their descent from Socrates, though other elements mingle their influence—especially revived Pythagoreanism, and Ionian and Atomist philosophies of nature.

It has sometimes been said that the first book of Plato's *Republic*, if it stood by itself, might be a purely Socratic dialogue, that the real Socrates would certainly not have gone on to construct an ideal state. This view seems to me to come from a too exclusive reliance upon Xenophon. It can be proved at all events that the three great paradoxes of the Platonic ideal state did not originate with Plato himself. The abolition of private property formed part of the Cynic ideal⁽¹⁸⁾, to which the simple community described in the second book of the *Republic* and called by Glaucon "a city of pigs" (ii. 372 D) is a not obscure allusion. Herodotus speaks of a Scythian tribe, the Agathyrsi, as having their wives and children in common, "in order that they may all be brethren of one another"—the "primitive marriage" or family institutions of a savage tribe being interpreted in the light of some new rationalist theory—the very theory of Plato in the *Republic*, but evidently familiar to Herodotus before Plato's birth, or while Plato was still a child. The idea of a community of wives was also known to Euripides⁽¹⁹⁾. The opening of a political career to women was satirised by Aristophanes in his *Ecclesiazusae*, produced in 392 B.C.—a much earlier date than on any reasonable theory can be assigned to the *Republic*; and a comic dramatist does not caricature ideas until they have become familiar to the average man. These arguments do not of course prove that Socrates himself had maintained the revolutionary proposals of Plato, but they do prove that paradoxes, which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates without any feeling of dramatic impropriety, had been uttered before Plato published them. And we may find at least the

germs of them in the Socrates we know from Xenophon and Aristotle. Thus Aristotle says that Socrates thought the virtues, or we should perhaps rather translate "the excellences," of men and women were the same (*Pol.* i. 13. § 9, 1260a, 22). Aristotle says "Socrates," without the definite article by which he usually distinguishes the Platonic Socrates from the historical; so that the reference need not be merely to Plato's *Meno* (73 B)⁽²⁰⁾. Now if the excellences of the two sexes are not different in kind, does it not follow logically that they should have the same public responsibilities, and the same training for them? And this is just the idea which Plato works out in the *Republic*, carrying out into detail what Aristotle tells us that Socrates said. Again, the prosaic and conservative Xenophon tells us (*Mem.* iii. 9. § 10) that according to Socrates "the true kings and rulers are those that have the science of ruling." Is not this the germ of the crowning paradox of the *Republic*, the first upheaval of "the third great wave" (*Rep.* v. 472 A), that philosophers should rule? In literal expression Xenophon's Socratic saying is reproduced in the doctrine of the *Politicus* (293), which is not however put into the mouth of Socrates. The whole philosophic state of the *Republic* is simply a translation into "large letters" of the undoubtedly Socratic doctrine that "virtue is knowledge." The best life must be guided and controlled by the highest wisdom, and the best society can only be realised under the rule of reason. Xenophon probably saw nothing more in what Socrates taught than a condemnation of the Athenian democracy he disliked. Plato may have greatly elaborated the picture, but the suggestion for

it clearly came from Socrates. The abolition of the private family would probably not seem so objectionable to the husband of Xanthippe as it did to Aristotle, whose family life seems to have been peculiarly happy; but it would certainly not be an idea to attract the sympathy of Xenophon, or to be paraded in his apology for Socrates.

The idea of a future life is treated by Socrates in Plato's *Apology* as doubtful (40 c); and the *Apology* is generally regarded as the least unhistorical of the Platonic representations of his master. But Socrates is here speaking to the Athenian jurors, and he does not go beyond the ordinary limits of the official religion of the state. In the prison to his intimate friends, especially to those who may have heard Pythagorean teaching, he might very well speak differently. Still, on the whole, the probability is that Plato, in the form he gives to the doctrine of universals and in his assertion of the transmigration of souls in the *Phædo*, is Pythagorising Socrates—if one may use such a phrase. The picture of the closing scene is apparently historical; it is so quiet, so prosaic even in some of its details, as Pater has remarked⁽²¹⁾; but the Socrates of the *Phædo* has a more definite and elaborate philosophical doctrine than the actual Socrates seems likely to have taught. Yet even the theory of Ideas, as already said, can be found in germ in phrases which Xenophon has repeated without being aware of their philosophical significance. Plato, gradually working out his theory of knowledge, may not himself have fully realised how much of his own later thoughts he was reading into the mind of his master. Phrases and suggestions thrown out by Socrates in the ardour of some dialectic

encounter, or in some moment of what he himself would have called inspiration, may have come to receive a fuller content and a more precise meaning than Socrates himself would have acknowledged. Chance words heard in childhood or youth often gather round them a significance of which those who first uttered them never dreamt: and we know that philosophers and theologians in all ages have not always accepted the expositions of their disciples, who have developed their doctrines whilst professing merely to systematise them. "What lies he is telling about me" might well have been said by Socrates, had he heard Plato reading the *Phædo* or the *Republic*.

It is unnecessary to suppose (with Teichmüller) ⁽²²⁾ a deliberate criticism of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in such dialogues as the *Protagoras* or the *Charmides*. Plato could certainly not have been satisfied with the representation of Socrates given by Xenophon: but he need not have taken offence at the allusions to his brother Glaucon and his uncle Charmides. Athenæus, who refers to the supposed rivalry of Plato and Xenophon, quotes an anecdote, according to which Socrates said he had a dream that Plato became a crow and settled on his bald head and scratched it, and looked round and cawed ⁽²³⁾. Teichmüller, ever on the lookout for allusions to the quarrels of authors, interprets this as referring to Plato's criticisms of Antisthenes, Xenophon, and the rest of the Socratic circle. The anecdote proves nothing, except that Plato had detractors. Xenophon, always taking a commonplace view of everything, saw in Socrates a good man who gave sound practical advice—an ethical preacher. Plato saw in him a man whose mission it was to set people thinking, and Xeno-

phon's *Memorabilia* must have seemed to him a very poor monument to his master⁽²⁴⁾. But definite allusions to particular passages can hardly be traced. We should certainly understand Plato better if we always knew against whom his words were specially directed; and the endeavour to detect such allusions is an interesting exercise of ingenuity. The most ingenious guess, however, admits of no perfect verification, and such ingenuity may be pushed too far. An author may say something that serves as a criticism or correction of what some one else has said; it does not necessarily follow that he was consciously thinking of that other person specially, or at all, when he wrote down his arguments.

The relations of Plato with the other members of the Socratic circle is a matter on which we should naturally like more information than we possess. Plato was connected by kinship with Critias, Charmides, and Antiphan, and he may have been inclined to see them all in a more favourable light than that in which they appeared to the Athenian democracy. As a young man, he had probably met the brilliant Alcibiades, who might have done so much to help Athens, and who by his recklessness did so much to harm her; and it has been plausibly suggested that in Plato's description of the "philosophic nature" corrupted by evil influences, and thus becoming the most dangerous character (*Rep.* vi. 491 E), he may have been thinking of "the lion's whelp" that the Athenian people had reared in their midst⁽²⁵⁾. In the *Symposium* he has given a startlingly vivid and probably true picture of the strange, ardent spirit of the man, of his personal charm and intensity of passion for both good and evil. Of the

dialogues named after him, the first may be genuine, but it is not free from doubt. It gives no picture of Alcibiades. It is in the direct dramatic form, and in its contents closely resembles a Socratic conversation, as Xenophon would record it.

Aristippus of Cyrene is introduced by Xenophon (*Mem.* ii. 1) as confuted by Socrates in a long argument. Tradition makes him come to Athens, attracted by the fame of Socrates. He was reckoned among the Socratics, and it was noted of him that he was the first of them to take pay ⁽²⁶⁾, *i.e.* to become a Sophist or professional teacher, and as such Aristotle refers to him (*Met.* B 2. 996a, 32). We may well imagine that the individualist who despised the sciences and professed to make the feeling of the moment his test of right and wrong was not very congenial to Plato. A story in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (ii. 23, 1398b, 29) makes him rebuke the "too assuming" language of Plato (the word ἐπαγγελτικώτερον might signify "too high flown" or "too dogmatic") by saying, "That was not our friend's way," meaning Socrates. The story is of interest as showing what the Cyrenaic freethinker may have found attractive in Socrates and the tendency of Plato to develop his master's teaching, making it more elaborate and more definite. An anecdote, that comes to us on more doubtful authority, makes Plato say to Aristippus, "You alone can wear either a festive mantle or rags" ⁽²⁷⁾. In the *Phædo* (59 c) it is mentioned that Aristippus was not present along with the others at the death of Socrates, though he was in Ægina, not far off. Diogenes Laertius (iii. 1. § 36) says Plato meant this as a reproach to Aristippus—surely an unnecessary inference, due to the gossiping biographers who try

to find small personal motives in every statement⁽²⁸⁾. Tradition makes Aristippus a visitor at the court of the elder, or of the younger, Dionysius, along with Plato⁽²⁹⁾. There is no need of supposing any allusion to the Cyrenaics in the introduction of Theodorus of Cyrene in the *Theatetus*. The mention of Theodorus is more likely to be a recognition of Plato's obligation to the geometrician. Aristippus "flung dirt at" mathematics (Arist. *Met.* B 2, 996a, 32) because they had no bearing on questions of good and evil. That was one of the many points on which Plato differed from him.

Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic school, was a native of Athens, but is said to have come to Socrates only at an advanced age. He is almost certainly alluded to by Plato in the *Sophistes* (251 B) as a "late-learned old man." Antisthenes was not merely interested in holding up the ideal of austere independence, contemning all the wants of ordinary mankind and all the ties of ordinary society. He did not merely preach the "return to nature" in its coarsest form. He also raised the greatest logical controversy of the ages. He may be called the first Nominalist. His extreme individualism appears in his logic as well as in his ethics. When Plato spoke of the universal as what gave reality to the individual, Antisthenes retorted with that appeal to the senses and to ordinary language which has usually satisfied the common-sense critics of idealism, "I see a horse, I do not see 'horseness'" (the abstract quality of horse)⁽³⁰⁾. But with an unflinching consistency, not shown by other Individualists and Nominalists, he saw that the denial of universals made all general assertions impossible. You

cannot say "The man is good," but only "The man is the man," or "Good is good." As a modern wit has put it, it is an obviously false proposition that "A is B," because it is to assert that a thing is what it is not; it is to recognise, what common-sense dislikes doing, that identity and difference are not mutually exclusive, and that many individuals may share in a common predicate. Extremes meet: and the consequences of Antisthenes's Nominalism are only put in another way, when it is said that he denied the possibility of contradicting anything, and so denied the possibility of falsehood. If you cannot predicate anything of anything else, you may as well say anything you like.

That there should be controversy between Antisthenes and Plato was inevitable—a controversy probably most useful to Plato, helping him to realise his problems and his theories more clearly. The Cynic, who was a voluminous writer of dialogues, and perhaps of other works, seems to have made characteristically coarse attacks on the refined and elegant lecturer of the Academy⁽³¹⁾. He did not obtain a direct reply. But there seems little doubt that Plato refers to him in the *Sophistes*, and that in the *Theætetus* it is really the views of Antisthenes which are dealt with under the name of Protagoras. Antisthenes, as well as Protagoras, it may be noted, wrote a work called "Truth." Plato was probably thinking of him also in the *Euthydemus*, where the impossibility of contradicting or "affirming that which is not" is referred to (285 D).

The third school which came out of the Socratic company, the school in which the dialectical and logical interest was predominant, had more affinity

with Plato himself. Euclides of Megara, and Terpsion, both of whom were present at the death of Socrates, are introduced alone in the prologue of the *Theatetus*. It is Euclides who is supposed to have made, revised, and kept the record of the conversation of Socrates on the question, What is knowledge? However doubtful and hidden may be the allusions of Plato in many other places, there seems here a pretty clear indication that the arguments of the *Theatetus* owe something to Megaric influence. The Megaric school, by identifying "the One" with "the Good," seem to have brought the Eleatic and the Socratic teaching together, and Euclides and the earlier representatives of the school appear to have had much in common with Plato's doctrine of Ideas, though after Plato's time such teachers as Stilpo may have joined hands with the Cynics in ridiculing the Platonic doctrine⁽³²⁾. Many of the traditional fallacies and logical puzzles were due to Megaric ingenuity; and they contain problems of more metaphysical importance than might be suspected at first sight. They helped to show, what the dogmatic common-sense of the practical man finds so hard to admit, that there are many questions which cannot be answered with a "Yes" or a "No."

Plato's attitude to the Sophists has been much misunderstood. Grote has shown, what to the careful student of Greek literature should hardly have needed proof, that "Sophist" was in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. the name of a profession and not the name of a sect. The Sophists were the teachers of "higher education" in those days: they performed, well or ill, the educational functions of universities.

They had no common doctrine. Some of them popularised, and in the process exaggerated or vulgarised, the opinions of some of the older philosophers. Thus Gorgias is by tradition connected with Empedocles (Pl. *Meno*, 76 c)⁽³³⁾, and the account we have of his singular work, "On Nature or the Non-Real," seems to show that he pushed to caricature the Eleatic doctrine of the sole reality of "the One" about which nothing determinate can be predicated. Protagoras is by Plato in the *Theætetus* connected with the Heracliteans; but, as already said, this may be logical rather than historical affinity. Polus is spoken of as acquainted with the doctrines of Anaxagoras (*Gorg.* 465 D), and we know that traces of Anaxagorean ideas and formulæ may be found in Euripides, the poet of the Sophistic age. There was no common doctrine held by all the Sophists; and there were great differences among them in respect of character, ability, and reputation. Plato treats Gorgias with marked respect, and he may have known him personally⁽³⁴⁾, as Gorgias lived on till about 375 B.C. Protagoras (who must have died when Plato was still a boy), Prodicus, and Hippias are pictured with more of irony (*Protag.* 315, 337). Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, fencing and boxing masters, as we might call them, who have taken to the new dialectic and give displays of logical feats of arms, are represented in a spirit of broad farce. Thrasymachus, who is spoken of as a rhetorician by Aristotle, but whom we may fairly take as meant by Plato to represent a certain type of Sophist, is treated with some bitterness in the *Republic*, though Plato makes Socrates disclaim enmity to him (vi. 498 D). "Thrasymachus and I have become friends, although

indeed we never were enemies." It is worth noting that the doctrines with which Socrates deals most sternly are put into the mouth, not of a Sophist, but of an Athenian young man of the world—Callicles (in the *Gorgias*), who has a contempt for the Sophists but values rhetoric, and has learnt the phrases of the new rationalism. On the other hand, Plato's own brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, are made the exponents of views which we have every reason to regard as of Sophistic origin (in *Rep.* ii.), though they are dissatisfied with them and crave something better.

Grote's representation of the Sophists is, however, unsatisfactory; he does not recognise sufficiently that the Sophists, though not a sect with a common doctrine, which Socrates and Plato feel bound to refute at all hazards in the interests of morality and religion, do nevertheless represent a common tendency, a great intellectual upheaval, the beginning, but only the beginning, of reflection about human society and conduct. Plato, in the *Republic* (vi. 492), has put the matter quite clearly. It is not the individual Sophists who corrupt our youth, as old-fashioned persons think; the individual teacher is only the mouthpiece of that great Sophist—the People. And similarly, in the *Politicus* (291 c, 303 c), he says that the greatest Sophists are the party-politicians, upholders of the most monstrous *idola*, and themselves *idola*, imitators and magicians. The average Sophist—we might paraphrase it, the average journalist or popular preacher—supplies just what his patrons want. His intellectual and moral principles are the same as theirs, only a little more sharply and neatly formulated. He represents general culture and can quote the poets and

supply an ingenious commentary on their obscure sayings; his science or philosophy must be "up to date," but at all hazards it must be popular, tempered by common-sense, and not go too far into things; or if it is eccentric, it must be easily understood and summed up in a few catchwords. He can appeal to "Nature" (without discussing what Nature is). The appeal may be to vague cosmopolitan sentiment, as with Hippias (*Protag.* 337 c, d): or may cover mere unscrupulous egotism, like that of Callicles. But this general movement of thought had prepared the way for a deeper philosophy, and was necessary to prepare the way for it. The Sophists, in teaching skill in public speaking and in endeavouring to fit their pupils for successful political careers, had raised the problems of moral and political philosophy and the problems of logic, without a full consciousness of the significance of what they were doing. They had broken down the barriers of mere tradition and authority, and so cleared a path for the great original thinkers.

The Platonic Socrates does not attack the opinions of the Sophists so much as the way in which they hold these opinions. Socrates and Plato oppose the Sophists, but not in the sense of a conservative reaction against the glimmering new light. What the ordinary Sophist was content to do in a haphazard way, satisfied with mere rhetorical effect and verbal nicety, or with plausible superficial dialectic, they seek to do more thoroughly. They oppose the Sophist by adopting his weapons, sharpening them and turning them against him. They do not object to the Sophist because he questions old beliefs and venerable customs, but because he is satisfied with very perfunctory solutions. Against

Protagoras, who takes a common-sense or "intuitionist" view of ethics, as if we all knew what virtue was without defining it, the Platonic Socrates is ready to maintain what looks like the theory of Aristippus; for he makes pleasure and the greater amount of pleasure the test of goodness. But, even in this comparatively early dialogue, Plato's theory is something deeper than the theory of the Cyrenaic Sophist; for his Socrates goes on to speak of an "art of measuring" pleasures (*Protag.* 356 D), which reminds us of Bentham's moral arithmetic, and to make knowledge of this art—not the feeling of the moment—the ultimate test. What Plato is really concerned to prove is, that men err through ignorance: it is the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge. The position is not really inconsistent with the doctrine of the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* and the *Philebus*, though we may trace a steady advance in care and precision of statement and a growing sense of the complexity of the problem. Plato never adopted the Cynic paradox that pleasure is something to be shunned in itself (see *Phileb.* 44 c); what he comes to see is that pleasures differ in kind (as John Stuart Mill held, correcting his predecessors), and in his later dialogues Plato develops this difference, whereas in the *Protagoras* he had seemed to accept a mere difference in quantity. In a very true sense Socrates and Plato may be called "Utilitarians." It is Plato who defies conservative prejudice by the revolutionary saying that "the most useful is what should be considered honourable and holy" (*Rep.* v. 457 B, 458 E); but Plato has a measure of Utility other than mere individual feeling. His standard is the stability and harmony of a society. His ultimate

appeal is to Reason and Experience, to the trained mind and the disciplined character, not to the instincts and impulses of the animal nature. Bentham's saying, that "Vice is Miscalculation," is precisely the Socratic doctrine—stated in its lowest terms. Plato, if one may try to translate his views into modern equivalents, would have maintained the Utilitarian doctrine, even in its Benthamist form, against a Common-Sense or Intuitionist philosopher, who simply fell back on his own infallible conscience or on the general opinion of mankind as a vindication of the distinctions he made between right and wrong. But his Socrates would have plied John Stuart Mill with many questions as to how he could distinguish pleasures according to kinds, welcoming him as an ally in discovering the truth, but showing that his theory has not yet quite reached it, using examples to prove that what is "actually desired" and what is "desirable" are not always the same thing, and asking him particularly who are the "competent judges" of pleasures, and how he is justified in maintaining that it is "better" to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied? And, when Mill admitted that "Socrates dissatisfied" was better than a "fool satisfied," Socrates would ask him whether he had not then given the first place to knowledge instead of to pleasure?

Plato came to treat "Sophistic" in a generalised and abstract fashion as an imperfect or sham philosophy. In the *Gorgias* it is said to be, like rhetoric, one of the forms of flattery, *i.e.* it accepts the opinions of mankind and follows them. In the *Theætetus* the Protagoras described is, as has been well said, no longer a person but a logical formula⁽³⁵⁾. In the *Sophistes*

we are still farther away from the portraiture of the real Sophists of the age of Socrates. It has sometimes been argued⁽³⁶⁾ that there was a degeneration in the character of the profession, and that the "earlier" and the "later" Sophists are treated differently by Plato. Any actual lowering in the status of the Sophist was probably due to growing differentiation; rhetoricians like Isocrates disowning the name, and teachers like Plato and Aristotle—though called Sophists by the rhetoricians—coming to occupy a distinct position and probably attracting the pupils who in earlier days would have flocked to hear Protagoras or Prodicus; so that "Sophist" came to be the name only of the less important teachers of dialectic or general culture⁽³⁷⁾. The Sophists of the earlier period are not all put on the same moral or intellectual level by Plato. In his later dialogues he seems, under the names of famous Sophists of the past age, to be attacking contemporaries like Antisthenes the Cynic, or to be dealing with certain tendencies of opinion and certain shallow logical theories, rather than describing actual persons. The "Sophist," in the dialogue of that name, is defined in terms of Plato's fully-formed idealism as he who deals with appearances and not with reality: he is the generalised representative of sham-thinking, of shallow popular philosophy, of "uncriticised commonplace"⁽³⁸⁾. And yet, even in the *Sophistes* (231 E), it is discovered incidentally that the Sophist is "a purger of souls from opinions obstructive to knowledge." Plato seems to indicate that this stage of crude rationalism, of superficial culture, however shallow it may often be, is a necessary step in the preparation for grasping truth. Socrates and Plato were "Sophists" in the opinion of

most of their fellow-citizens. They rose above the Sophists in doing what these had proposed to do, in a more serious spirit, with more intellectual thoroughness, and caring for truth, not for wealth or popularity.

To the rhetoricians, who had since the time of Gorgias been becoming more and more a distinct class from the Sophists, Plato's references are clear and distinct. In fact the rhetoricians or literary stylists of Plato's own age were for him very much what Protagoras and Prodicus and the others had been for Socrates—the prominent representatives of general educated opinion. Plato can forecast a true art of rhetoric, to be used in subordination to philosophy and to the true science of statesmanship (*Phaedrus*, 271; *Polit.* 303 E–304 D)—an ideal of the art, which Aristotle seems to have set himself to realise; but for the ordinary rhetorician who despises or neglects philosophy he has only scorn. The rhetorician like Lysias is bitterly criticised. Of Isocrates Plato has more hopes, though his references to Isocrates in the *Phaedrus* (279 A, B) and perhaps in *Euthydemus* (304 D–306 C) may very well have been resented as somewhat too patronising by that great master of dignified platitudes. Isocrates professed to teach "philosophy," and looked down on the Sophists, amongst whom he included Plato, scornfully alluding to the "laws and politics written by the Sophists." By philosophy Isocrates meant *litera humaniores* as a preparation for a political career—not cosmology, not logic, not mathematics, but the practice of style, "the teaching of prose composition in practical themes of general Hellenic interest" (³⁹). Probably in direct contradiction of Plato, he declares that the attainment of opinion and

not knowledge is the end of education. "It is better to form probable opinions about useful things than to have exact knowledge of useless things" (40). Plato seems to have had a personal liking for Isocrates; and some writer of dialogues represented Isocrates and Plato conversing "about the poets" in Plato's country house, where Isocrates was a guest (41). On most subjects their views must have differed greatly, and a good many controversial allusions can be detected, with more or less probability, in their writings. Plato's later prose style, in its more flowing manner and avoidance of hiatus, was apparently influenced by the example and teaching of Isocrates. Representatives of different ideals of culture and heads of what may be regarded as rival schools, they may nevertheless have remained fairly good personal friends and enjoyed occasional interchange of talk, "except in opinion not disagreeing," as Carlyle said of John Sterling and himself. The tradition of their friendship is certainly less likely to have been invented than would have been a tradition of enmity.

Plato's silence respecting the great philosopher Democritus was a problem even in antiquity. "Why, having controverted almost all those before him, did he never mention Democritus?" (42). Perhaps those who asked this question had forgotten that Democritus, though born about 460, lived to a great age (till about 360 B.C.), and was thus a senior contemporary of Plato's, and that Plato does not generally allude expressly to contemporaries. References such as those to Lysias and Isocrates in the *Phædrus* are the exception. Of course there are the usual stories of jealousy. Aristoxenus says that Plato wished to

burn all the writings of Democritus that he was able to collect, but that two Pythagoreans, Amyelas and Cleinias, prevented him, as it would do no good, for copies of his books were already in many hands⁽⁴³⁾. It seems probable that Plato alludes to the theories of Democritus in several places in the *Timæus*, e.g. where he denies the plurality of worlds (55 c)⁽⁴⁴⁾. The reference in the *Theætetus* (155 E) to the materialists as the people who "believe in nothing but what they can grasp with their hands" (cf. *Soph.* 246 A), would be unfair if intended to apply to Democritus himself; but it may refer to the Cynics, who, like the Stoics after them, were all professedly materialists; or it may refer to Democriteans, who exaggerated, as is often the way with enthusiastic pupils, the seeming anti-idealism of their master; or Plato may be speaking with the same humorous licence which led Jowett to apply this very phrase of Plato's to Mr. Herbert Spencer. Democritus undoubtedly *meant* to be a materialist; but, like all the more philosophic of his way of thinking, he was obliged to define the ultimate realities, which he called *εἶδη* ("forms"), as intelligible and not sensible realities; and perhaps the terminology of Plato's idealism, as well as Plato's characteristic distinction between the world of appearance and the world of reality, owes something to the great Atomist⁽⁴⁵⁾.

One other literary contemporary of Plato's must not be passed over in silence, a man of utterly diverse opinions—Aristophanes, of whom he has given so brilliant and sympathetic a picture in the *Symposium*. In the *Life* by Olympiodorus we are told that Plato took great pleasure in Aristophanes, the comic poet, and

in Sophron, and that he was helped in writing his dialogues by their representation of characters. And he is said to have taken such delight in them, that when he died, the works of Aristophanes and Sophron were found in his bed. The story may simply have grown up, because of the *Symposium*; but the mention of Sophron, who is never named by Plato, and the unlikelihood of Aristophanes being an attractive writer to Neo-Platonists, may be used as arguments to prove that the tradition was old and genuine⁽⁴⁾.

CHAPTER IV

PLATO'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

THE later history of Platonism has led to the prevalence of somewhat distorted notions about Plato's own philosophy, notions which still to some extent interfere with a right understanding of it. Platonism, in popular opinion, suggests a vague, mystical manner of thinking, given to irresponsible emotional raptures and contemptuous of the plodding work of intellect. The systematic student of Plato's dialogues could find support for this view in a few passages only, taken out of their context and read without attention to Plato's warnings as to the sense in which they are to be understood. It is true that Plato has not Aristotle's untiring curiosity about facts as facts, his passion for detailed knowledge of all kinds. Plato, until his later years, seems to have followed Socrates in disregarding the study of the physical universe; and, when he does write about it, he does so with an apology, with full warning as to the uncertainty of the subject; and he speaks of such studies as only a harmless pastime (*Tim.* 59 c). Like Socrates, he is more interested in the problems of human society, the problems of good and evil character, than in "the trees or the country" (*Phædrus*, 230 d). But the interest of Socrates in the possibility of

arriving at knowledge, and in the method of arriving at it, is in Plato intensified and extended. Even the passionate love (ἔρως) of which he speaks in the *Symposium*, and the divine madness of which he speaks in the *Phædrus* (265 A, B) are but other aspects of that craving for wholeness or completeness, that dissatisfaction with all imperfect attainment which is treated as the characteristic of philosophy in the *Republic* (v. 474, 475). Plato is not a philosopher who turns to Faith or Inspiration in any sense in which these are antagonistic to Reason. He has the fullest faith *in* Reason, and warns us against "misology" (*Phædo*, 89, 90).

Plato labours consciously and with continuous effort at the problems of what we call "Logic" in its widest sense, *i.e.* not merely the study of the methods of reasoning or inference, but the science of Epistemology. He has not got the technical language which Aristotle introduced, though he himself was gradually helping to form it. His discussions often seem unnecessary to us, his difficulties less than they really were, because we have inherited the phrases and distinctions of the Aristotelian logic, and have our cut-and-dried answers ready. We are astonished at his not distinguishing contraries from contradictories in the *Protagoras* (330 *seq.*), where he argues that, if holiness is not the same as justice, justice must be unholiness, and so on, holding that every opposite has only one opposite and no more⁽¹⁾. We see at once that certain puzzles arise from not distinguishing the *dictum simpliciter* from the *dictum secundum quid*; and we wonder that he thought it worth while to deal at length with verbal tricks, such as the argument that if a man is a father

he must be always and in every way a father, otherwise he would be a father and not a father at the same time ; and so Chrysippus is the father of all men and also of all gudgeons and pigs and puppy-dogs (*Euthyd.* 298). We become rather wearied of the elaborate divisions and subdivisions by the help of which he professes to search for the definition of Sophist or Statesman (*Soph.* and *Pol.*). We feel vexed that he who wrote the *Symposium* and the *Phædrus* and the first part of the *Protagoras* and the last part of the *Phædo* should have written so much that is dry and dull and crabbed. We forget that the science of logic had to be made. We forget also that, in our easy-going neglect of it and contempt of scholastic subtleties, we are often taken in by arguments of our modern Sophists, the journalists and party-politicians and popular writers, which are no better than the absurdities of the two old Athenian fencing-masters, and more dangerous, because they affect human well-being. I need only allude to the uses made of words like "freedom," "independence," "state-interference"—as if, because "freedom" and "independence" are in general considered desirable things, and "interference" an undesirable thing, it followed that it was necessarily wrong to interfere with the freedom and independence of individuals, or churches, or corporations, or nations, when these were being used against the interests of human well-being and progress. Our encyclopædic philosopher, Mr. Herbert Spencer, the modern Hippias, and like Hippias a believer in "nature" as against "convention," thinks it a serious argument to scoff at the attempt to set aside the laws of nature by Acts of Parliament—as if the laws of

nature could be set aside by anyone without a miracle.

Even in what we have called the purely Socratic stage we find Plato displaying an interest in logical questions of which the Xenophontic Socrates shows little trace, but which the real Socrates may very well have possessed. In the *Charmides*, the dialogue on Temperance, the question of the possibility of certitude is formulated—the need of a science which shall be a “knowledge of knowledge” (172 A, B). In the *Laches* (on Courage) the search of Socrates for a general definition is described as the search for the common element in different cases (191, 192), and the objects of knowledge are spoken of as independent of time (198 D). In the *Lysis* (on Friendship) we find the notion of what in his later language Plato would have called the “idea” or “ideal” of friendship (219 D). In the *Meno* Socrates asks for a definition of virtue as such—not a list of the different good qualities of different sorts of people, such as Gorgias the Sophist was content to give. Socrates insists that, even if there are all sorts of virtues, yet they must have some one and the same “form” or nature, through which alone they are virtues: the word is *εἶδος* (72 C), which afterwards becomes more distinctly technical. The Sophistic puzzle, “How can we inquire about anything without already knowing it?” (80 D, E) is simply the early way of putting the logical problem, How can the mind pass from the known to the unknown? This puzzle leads the Platonic Socrates to propound the doctrine of “Recollection” or “Reminiscence,” which may indeed be an adaptation of a wild guess thrown out by the real Socrates, but which, connected as it is by Plato with the belief in the pre-

existence and transmigration of souls, points unmistakably to an Orphic or Pythagorean influence (*Meno*, 81. Cf. *Phædr.* 249 c; *Phædo*, 72 E seq.). Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* has made this Platonic doctrine familiar to the lovers of English poetry, but has done a good deal to obscure its philosophical meaning. It is not "from the recollections of early childhood" that Plato derives his intimations of immortality. "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting." That indeed is the language of Plato's myth. But Plato does not say that "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," and that the life of the youth who grows in experience and advances from the simple instincts of the child is a continuous losing of the light and a sinking into the shades of the prison-house. On the contrary, the soul on being confined in a mortal body is at first irrational; but when the life of sensation gives way to the life of thought, and under the influence of right education, the soul becomes capable of true knowledge (*Tim.* 44 B, c). The "years that bring the philosophic mind" are not to Plato a mere consolation for lost splendour and gladness, but are nearer to the heavenly world than the unthinking years of infancy and youth. When Wordsworth raises his "song of thanks and praise," not for the mere unreflecting delights of childhood,

"But for these obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings,
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,"

—in such a passage he comes nearer to the spirit and

argument of Plato. The greater part of his poem shows more of the influence of Rousseau's sentimental "return to nature" than of Plato's intellectual passion.

Borrowing from Orphic or Pythagorean sources the notion of pre-existence and the image of our earthly body as a prison-house or tomb, Plato gives a philosophical interpretation to the myth. The reason why all learning is recollecting is that "all nature is akin" (*ἅτε γὰρ τῆς φύσεως ἀπάσης συγγενοῦς οὐσης*, *Meno*, 81 c); in modern phrase, the universe is one intelligible system, of which the human mind can come to understand some part, just because and in so far as it applies the test of coherence or non-contradiction. One truth fits in with and leads on to another: falsehood is discrepancy⁽²⁾. Plato's doctrine is not the crude notion of "innate ideas," which Locke found it easy to ridicule. It is not intuitionism. [We do not start with a set of ready-made principles or axioms which we know to be true without any trouble, by merely looking at them. Only by strenuous effort and long struggle can truth be reached.] The art of dialectic—the intellectual midwifery of Socrates—is necessary to help the soul to bring forth sound and genuine thoughts (*Theæt.* 149–151). The slave-boy who manages to prove a simple geometrical proposition in the *Meno* (82 A–85 B) has to be helped from step to step by the questions of Socrates. The significant thing is that he can perceive the connection between the given character of the figure and the conclusions which follow from it. The mind is such that it can, so to speak, recover or restore the missing whole, of which at first it sees only fragments. Cognition, as we might put it in modern phrase without conscious use of the Platonic myth, is *recognition*.

In the *Republic* Plato makes no express mention of the doctrine of "Recollection," though he appears to allude to it in the "myth" of the tenth book, where he speaks of the souls that are to be reborn into our world as drinking more or less deeply of the river of Unmindfulness (621 A). But, in the parts of the dialogue where he is speaking in more precise language, the philosophical notion underlying the myth of Recollection is clearly to be found. Education is described, not as the putting of alien material into the mind, but as the turning round of the eye of the soul to behold the truth (vii. 518 B, C). In the process of attaining knowledge the soul comes together with that which is "akin to it" (vi. 490 B). This is just the meaning of the doctrine, stripped of the mythical setting which is given to it in the *Meno* and the *Phædrus*. And in this philosophical sense we may say that the doctrine is the common property of all idealist theories of knowledge, of all the theories which deny that knowledge is adequately explained when it is analysed into nothing but sensations or impressions made upon the previously blank tablet of the mind. It is the doctrine of Aristotle also, who has been so often misunderstood on this point and contrasted with Plato, though Aristotle states it with due caution and with full recognition of the aspect which Plato tended to overlook⁽³⁾. Descartes, who explained that by the phrase "innate ideas" (an unlucky phrase) he only meant potentialities requiring experience to bring them into actuality; Leibniz recalling attention to the development of knowledge from within the mind, and adding "*nisi intellectus ipse*" to the sensationalist formula which was mistakenly supposed to represent the whole of Aristotle's theory;

Kant with his argument that to make knowledge possible there must be in it an *à priori* element (a phrase too apt to suggest temporal priority),—all these have held, though in varying forms, the same doctrine which Plato sought to express by his myth of “Recollection”; and it is worth noting that Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant all, like Plato, approached the problem of knowledge with minds accustomed to the ideal of mathematical certainty. Knowledge which is really knowledge must to them, as to Plato, be something stable, something more than opinion, which may be more or less true, but which may be false.

This distinction between “knowledge” and “opinion” in some sense underlay all the earlier Greek philosophies, all of which put forward some explanation of the world differing in various degrees from popular belief. The distinction comes to the surface in the contempt of Heraclitus and Parmenides for the errors of the multitude. The poem of the latter was in two parts: First, “the way of truth,” the strict doctrine that only the One is; and second, “the way of opinion,” a popular—apparently Pythagorean—cosmology. Democritus with his distinction between “genuine knowledge” and “obscure knowledge” may also have prepared the way for Plato.

Towards the end of the *Meno* the distinctive characteristic of knowledge is declared to be, that what is truly known is made fast and secured *αἰτίας λογισμῷ*—*i.e.* by the reason or calculation of the cause or ground (98 A, B). [If we have got hold of some isolated fact, if we repeat some isolated statement, we may be saying what is true, but we do not really know it, unless we know why it is so. Only when we have got hold of

"the why" (to borrow Aristotle's convenient phrase), only when we have taken the mere fact out of its isolation and linked it with other things, only so far as we see the part as the part of the whole system to which it belongs, only then do we really "know." Otherwise we have only "opinion," true opinion it may be, but without seeing the reason for its truth, or having any security against error. Feeling this need of certainty in knowledge that can really be called such, Plato has to refute the consequences drawn, if not by Protagoras himself, then by others, from the famous formula that "man is the measure of all things." Protagoras himself may only have meant to assert the relativity of knowledge, in the sense in which every careful theory of knowledge must recognise that we can only know things under the conditions of the human mind: thus we have only a certain number and kind of senses, we cannot in perceiving and imagining escape the limitations of time and space. Plato, however, both in the *Cratylus* (386 A) and in the *Theatetus* (152 A), takes the Protagorean saying to mean that there is no objective certainty whatever, that everything depends on the appearance of the moment to this or that individual. Protagoras's *dictum* may have been understood to mean this by some of Plato's own contemporaries. Such an interpretation of it would fit in with an ethical theory such as that of Aristippus, who made the pleasure of the moment the standard of good, or with any other form of extreme individualism or rather "particularism," whether in ethics or in logic, such as the nominalism of Antisthenes. If we may take the account of Protagoras in Plato's earlier dialogue, the dialogue named

after him, as on the whole historically accurate, Protagoras himself had most probably never really seen the full logical consequences of his utterances, but remained in a safe region of common-sense, although his religious agnosticism alarmed the too superstitious Athenians. Protagoras, in his *Homo mensura*, was probably only giving expression to his scepticism about the old confident philosophies of nature, and calling attention to the determining human factor in all theories. But Plato, with his early familiarity with the more fearless scepticism of the Heracliteans, came to see clearly that, though the opinion of the average man may seem a safe practical test, so that in a sense "all men are teachers of virtue" (*Prot.* 327, 328), yet such common-sense philosophy gives us no real criterion of truth. Why should Protagoras's opinion be any better than that of anyone else? If the appeal is to intuition, to instinct, to the heart, the question may be asked, "Whose heart?" (⁴). Opinions differ, even the opinion of the same man at different times, and who is to decide? Behind the moderate humanist scepticism of the popular lecturer and his fashionable followers Plato sees the deeper problem raised by the paradoxical Heracliteans. "If everything is in a state of transition, and there is nothing abiding, there is no knowledge at all" (*Cratyl.* 440). Unless we can find some truths that are eternal and not dependent on the opinions of this man or that man or of many men, there is no fixed ground to enable us to judge any one opinion more probable than another, or to say why the educated man's opinion is more worth having than that of the uneducated, or the intuitions of a man more to be regarded than those of a pig or a baboon (cf. *Theat.* 161 c). Some such

train of reflection we may suppose to have led Plato to connect Protagoras's teaching, as he does in the *Cratylus* and the *Theætetus*, with an extreme of individualist scepticism of which that eminently respectable professor may never have dreamt.

The followers of Protagoras are not extinct, though few acknowledge him, as Mr. Grote does; and Plato's arguments have not lost their importance. Those, for instance, who hold that the axioms of mathematics are only postulates for our convenience, and might quite well be otherwise than they are—say, in some other part of the universe; those who exalt “the will to believe” of the individual and deny the absolute necessity of reason are, wittingly or unwittingly, adopting the position of Protagoras, and making all knowledge impossible by resolving all knowledge into individual opinion, and ultimately into the feeling of the moment. That some things must be absolutely certain, if anything whatever is to be even probable; that mere change and flux are inconceivable, unless there is something stable and permanent,—these are the fundamental principles in Plato's theory of knowledge, as he had reached it when he passed out of the purely Socratic stage; and they are principles common to him and to Aristotle, and, as already said, to all the great idealist philosophies. That science is of the universal, and not of the particular, is as true to us now as it was to Plato. The mathematician is concerned not with *this* triangle, but with *the* triangle. To the botanist *this* or *that* plant is but a specimen, more or less satisfactory, of the *species* which he describes. To the Greeks of Plato's time geometry was the only science that had made any considerable progress; and therefore, when

he speaks of science, he is always thinking of the mathematical ideal of certainty. Hence he more easily adopts the view of the timeless or eternal nature of scientific truth than might appear proper to the modern logician, who has to consider an immense number of sciences that deal with what seems subject to the changes and chances of the temporal process, which Plato considered to fall outside the region of the strictest scientific method. In his latest work, the *Laws*, Plato reverts once more to the formula of Protagoras, and amends it by saying that "God and not man is the measure of all things" (iv. 716 c). He uses the words with a specially ethical significance; but if we recall the saying, which, according to Plutarch, was ascribed to Plato, "God always geometrises" (⁵), we may see the link between what looks like an appeal from science to theology and his earlier thinking, in which the study of mathematics led him to discover his test of certitude. The truths of mathematics are not mere matters of human opinion, but are true for all intelligence, though the diagrams we use, and the notations we adopt as aids, show that even in mathematics we have not reached the most perfect use of reason.

If it be admitted that knowledge in the strict sense must always be of the "one in the many" (cf. *Phædr.* 266 B), of the common or connecting element and not of the isolated particulars, what are we to say about this object of our knowledge? Socrates seems to have been satisfied with reaching the conclusion that knowledge must consist of conceptions, without going on to ask what gives these conceptions their truth or validity. Here is the point where Plato (if we take

Aristotle as our guide to the history of his thought) advanced beyond his master. Plato, as we have seen, had in his mind the Heraclitean doctrine raising difficulties greater than those of which Socrates was aware. The definitions, the definite knowledge which Socrates sought, could not apply to a world in flux; and the sensible world is just such a world in flux as the Heracliteans spoke of. So that universal definitions must apply to something other than the sensible. Now the Eleatics (whom Aristotle must be taken to include along with the Pythagoreans under the name of the "Italic" philosophers) had spoken of a reality, one and unchanging, known not by sense or by opinion based on sensation, but by intelligence. The object of true knowledge, then, must, it seemed to Plato, be such as the Eleatics spoke of, though not an abstract "one," but a plurality of "ones" distinct from the complex and manifold things of sense. The Pythagorean doctrine supplies the remaining element in Plato's solution of the difficulties he inherited from the Heracliteans and from Socrates. What we know scientifically are numbers, or rather geometrical figures (for, as already said, Greek arithmetic had, apart from the simplest operations, to be worked out geometrically). We have no accurate knowledge of things except in so far as we can measure them. Exact knowledge must be mathematical knowledge. The things we see and touch are only known in so far as we can think them under numerical or quantitative spatial relations. The field we are measuring may not be exactly a square or a rectangle, but it may approximate more or less to such a figure, and we can only know it scientifically by treating it as a square or a rectangle,

as an "imitation" of the perfect figure which alone admits of being known with scientific precision. The earlier doctrine of the Pythagorean brotherhoods may have been largely a mixture of magic and of the crude beginnings of mathematical science. Primitive science is everywhere the business of the magician or "medicine-man." But by the time of Plato, unless we are to reject Aristotle's very explicit testimony, "those who were called Pythagoreans" had got beyond that stage, and held a philosophy which consisted mainly in the attempt to construe the natural universe and human conduct in the light of mathematical concepts ("Justice is a proportion," etc.). Plato, extending and generalising this way of thinking beyond the limits of mathematics, makes the business of true science to consist in comprehending the world in the light of what we can conceive, since sense-perceptions leave us with a chaos that we cannot comprehend. As the Pythagoreans had spoken of things being knowable so far as they imitated numbers, so Plato spoke of things being knowable only as participating in "ideas" or "forms." The word *εἶδος* or *ιδέα* in ordinary Greek meant simply a "shape" or "manner," and it is often used in that way by Plato himself. It only gradually becomes technical; and we are apt to treat it as more technical than it ever becomes in Plato. Possibly, as already suggested, Plato's adoption of the term to signify that which is alone the object of real knowledge may be a bold borrowing from the great materialist whom he never names. Democritus had written *περὶ ἰδεῶν*, and had meant by "ideas" the atoms, which he holds to be the only ultimately real existences, but which are never known by the "obscure

perception" of our senses but only by the "true knowing" of thought. The atoms are conceptual, not perceptual, entities; for the materialist philosopher is obliged to assert that the conceptual is the ultimately real, though he doubtless thought of his atoms as material in the sense that they are space-occupying bodies⁽⁶⁾. Plato takes the word "idea" to mean what is real in the sense of being the alone permanent and the alone conceivable; but to Plato it means the completely immaterial, for his "ideas" are not in space. Their place, as Aristotle puts it, is in the mind⁽⁷⁾. Apart from Democritean usage, however, there was much in ordinary Greek language and in Greek artistic feeling to suggest the use of this word to signify the real, in the sense of that which is real for accurate scientific thought. If you are looking at a statue and ask, "What *is* this statue?" you probably do not want to be told that it is marble or plaster; you want to know what it means, what it represents, what it "imitates," what it manifests through the senses to the mind. You expect to be told its "form": it *is* Hermes or Apollo. And the one form or type of the god as conceived by the sculptor may be manifested in many visible and tangible statues, in bronze or ivory, in clay or marble; while the same material, if treated in a different manner, would no longer be the same statue. The matter, the material, is the medium of manifestation: what is essential is the form.

We have seen how Socrates identified the search for what each thing "is" with the discussion of things "according to kinds." If you are to say anything about anything, if you are to get beyond saying "this

is this," which is all that Antisthenes allows you to say, you must say "this is *such and such*." You must say what *kind* of thing this is. "Socrates is a man," "Socrates is wise." "Man" and "wise" in such sentences are kinds of being, not individual beings, and we only know anything by asserting its kind of being or all the various kinds of being in which it participates. It must be remembered that before Plato there was no distinct recognition of the difference between "things" and "qualities." The word ποιότης is introduced by him with an apology in the *Theætetus* (182 A), and the Latin equivalent "qualitas" was invented by Cicero⁽⁸⁾. All predication involves some rudimentary sort of classification. What is this? You must answer by saying what kind of thing it is, you must give its *species* or *genus*; and these words are just the scholastic Latin renderings of εἶδος and γένος, terms which Plato used as equivalent, but which were differentiated by Aristotle.

So far Plato's "doctrine of ideas" is common to him, to Aristotle, and to the modern logician. What is strange and startling in Plato's doctrine has come in part from his resorting now and then to imaginative pictures of the world of the ideas; and these pictures have too often been taken as if Plato meant them quite literally. To a great extent also the prevalent notions about Plato's ideas are due to the doctrine having been afterwards stiffened into dogmatism, and to a confusion between Plato's intention and the theories of other philosophers with which the use of language is apt to make us identify Plato's meaning. The myth of the *Phædrus* speaks of "a place above the heavens" where "what really exists" (ἡ οὐσία ὄντως ὄνσα) can be seen

in pure vision by the souls not yet immersed in earthly bodies (247 c). Poetic imagery, when employed to express religious or philosophical ideas, is always apt to be understood with a crude literalism: and so what Plato meant as the intelligible world, the sphere of the clearest and most perfected scientific thought, has come to be regarded as another world alongside of and separate from the sensible world, to be seen only in mystic ecstasy and by an escape from the trammels of rational thinking. And Plato's "most real beings" have been pictured as if they were models or specimens in an imaginary celestial museum. Leibniz (⁹), again, thought that his "monads" were Plato's ideas; his monads are indeed spiritualised atoms, but are more akin to Plato's "souls" than to his ideas. Kant's intelligible world of things-in-themselves has been supposed to be the same as the Platonic. But, in the first place, it is clearly wrong to call Plato's ideas "things." The necessities of language unfortunately compel us to interpolate this misleading word in translating Greek neuter adjectives and participles: τὰ ὄντως ὄντα are not properly "things-in-themselves." Ὁ αὐτοάνθρωπος or αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν does not mean "man-in-himself" or "the beautiful-in-itself," in the sense of "man" or "the beautiful" apart from all the conditions under which they can be known. It means "man" or "the beautiful" as we must think "man" or "the beautiful" when we are thinking scientifically. The individual man we cannot know completely: we can only know him as "man," as "wise" or "foolish," "handsome" or "ugly." Plato's intelligible world (τὰ νοητά) is meant to be really an intelligible world, and not, like Kant's intelligible world, to be just the very world we never can know.

On the other hand, Plato's "ideas" are not merely concepts in our minds. Modern critics of Plato often express astonishment that he did not see that Conceptualism was the true doctrine, avoiding the extremes of Nominalism and Realism: and some have actually tried to prove that Plato came to hold this moderate, common-sense doctrine at the last⁽¹⁰⁾. But Plato in the *Parmenides* shows us that he was fully aware that Conceptualism is no solution of the philosophical problem about knowledge and reality, but only a re-statement of the problem as if it were a solution. Plato had started with the Conceptualism of Socrates, and his problem arose out of that. Universals exist in our minds. Very well; but how do we distinguish between the truth and the falsehood of our conceptions? Is the concept a concept of something that is or of something that is not? (*Parm.* 132 B, c). Even John Stuart Mill, inheriting the traditions of the strictest sect of English Nominalists, was obliged to recognise "a one in the many" in at least a Conceptualist sense, if predication is to be possible; and when he came to discuss the subject of Division, he had to distinguish between "real kinds" and those classes which are merely artificial general concepts arbitrarily made for our convenience⁽¹¹⁾. Now "real kinds" are Plato's ideas. The biological doctrine of the fixity of species, in the stiff dogmatic form which modern evolutionary theories have overthrown, is, in fact, the direct historical descendant of Plato's theory, passing through the scholastic doctrine of the *infima species*, the kind which has no real kinds below it. Of course Plato should not be made responsible for dogmatism which grew out of his philosophy. He himself did not work

out his theory of ideas with special reference to the problem of the scientific classification of organic and inorganic substances. When he came to concern himself specially with the logical problem of classification (in *Soph.*, *Pol.*, *Phileb.*), he had advanced beyond the earlier form of the doctrine of Ideas, which tended to cut them off from one another and from things. In the *Phædrus*, *Phædo*, and *Republic*, the universals of which he is thinking most are the universals with which Socrates had been occupied—the just, the good, the beautiful, etc., and the universals employed in the mathematical sciences—equality, similarity, etc., this last being the aspect of the theory which owes most to Pythagorean influence. Plato, that is to say, while working out his distinctive theory, was most concerned with the fundamental concepts of ethics and of the mathematical sciences.

Plato's theory can indeed, as we have seen, be very well illustrated by the procedure of the classificatory sciences, in which *this* plant or animal is only a specimen, and the *species* (=the "idea" or type) is what is thought of and defined. But perhaps the best illustration from modern science is to be found in our phrase "the laws of nature," which manifest themselves in particular phenomena, and by which we make these phenomena intelligible to ourselves. We often speak of the laws of nature as if they were the causes of phenomena, and we are apt to hypostatise them, just as Plato's followers and he himself did with his Ideas. "Gravitation," "Evolution," "Energy" are "Ideas" in Plato's sense. Francis Bacon's word, *Formae*, is a connecting link between the Platonic ideas and the modern scientific conception of laws of nature, though

Bacon was combining a Platonic and Aristotelian conception with an Atomist way of envisaging the physical world⁽¹²⁾.

If we ask ourselves in what sense a law of nature is real, we have perhaps the best clue to the meaning and also to the ambiguities of Platonic language. We may, indeed, regard the laws of nature as the thoughts of God—the interpretation which Christian theology put upon the Platonic ideas. But Plato himself has put aside this interpretation as at least incomplete (*Parm.* 134 D, E); for they must be *our* thoughts also if they are to be the objects of our science and philosophy. Merely to say that the Ideas, or the laws of nature, are concepts—even divine concepts—seems hardly to explain the problem of objective reality. The word “real” is ambiguous. “Exist” is always apt to suggest existence in time and space. The Greek word *εἶναι* (to be) had always the twofold meaning of existence and of validity or truth. “Most really existent” is a less accurate translation of *τὰ ὄντως ὄντα* than “most thoroughly true and valid”⁽¹³⁾. Plato does not mean to assert his ideas of existence in any place; but, on the other hand, they are not mere creations of our thought. He asserts of them what in modern phrase we might call objective validity, though he has certainly not reached the modern interpretation of the objective as that which is valid *for all minds*, and is apt to picture it at least as if it had an existence independent of minds, because independent of any individual mind at any particular moment.

Apart from the misunderstandings likely to result from too literal an acceptance of Plato's occasional use of highly figurative language, it must be admitted that

Plato himself, though not intending to make his ideas mere duplicates of the things of the sensible world, as the gods of the popular mythology were but magnified and non-natural men (the analogy is Aristotle's, *Met.* B 2, 997b, 10), nevertheless laid so much stress on the distinction between the ideas and the phenomenal world they were meant to explain that he naturally led people to think of the intelligible realm as another world alongside of the phenomenal⁽¹⁴⁾. Moreover, he was content to leave the relation between appearance and reality somewhat vague. It may be called the presence or manifestation or participation of the idea in the thing (*παρουσία, κοινωνία*, *Phædo*, 100 D) or by some other phrase. These words seem intended to express what in mediæval language would have been described as the doctrine of *universalia in rebus*—the universal having a determinate existence only in particular things. But Plato's insistence on the non-reality of the sensible and phenomenal world as such leads easily to the inference that it is the abstract universal as such of which he asserts reality. The tendency to such abstraction in logic, like the corresponding tendency to asceticism in ethics, and to abstract intellectualism in regard to the world of the senses generally, is certainly to be found in Plato, and became dominant in the Platonism of later ages. But in Plato himself it is only a tendency, stronger at some times than at others. Thus the body is looked at merely as the tomb of the soul in the *Phædo*; in the *Republic* the body is deemed worthy of the most careful training for the sake of the soul. The poets and painters are treated very severely in the ideal state, but in the *Phædrus* (250 D) he had allowed that "sight is the most piercing

of the bodily senses," and that ideal beauty might be discerned through visible loveliness. And so there are some passages in which the transcendence of the ideas, and some in which the immanence of the ideas in the things of sense, seems to be accentuated.

In the *Euthydemus* there is a curious passage (301 A) which touches, in a farcical manner, on the difficulty about the "presence" (παρουσία) of the ideas in things of sense. Socrates admits that beautiful things are not the same as the beautiful (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν); but each of them has some beauty present with it (πᾶρεστι ἐκάστω αὐτῶν καλλὸς τι). On this the Sophist Dionysodorus asks: "And are you an ox because an ox is present with you, or are you Dionysodorus because Dionysodorus is present with you?"—a suggestion which horrifies Socrates. If the *Euthydemus* belongs to the earlier period of Plato's writings, this is a very remarkable anticipation in comedy of one of the difficulties raised in the *Parmenides*; and the passage might indeed be used as an argument for putting the *Euthydemus* later than its style and manner suggest. But Plato even in the *Phædo* (100 D) shows great hesitation, and had clearly arrived at no fixed or dogmatic expression of the way in which he conceived universals to be related to particulars.

In the stage of the *Phædo* and the *Republic* Plato seems ready to posit ideas corresponding to every general concept, *i.e.* to every term which can stand as the predicate of a proposition. He insists on the oneness of each idea as contrasted with the multiplicity of the things we perceive, but hardly anything is said about the relation of the ideas to one another. There is, however, one very important passage where the reading

of the MSS. has been quite unnecessarily doubted⁽¹⁵⁾. In the *Republic*, v. 476 A, it is said that ideas such as the just and the unjust, good and evil (and we may note that Plato posits ideas here not merely of what is perfect or "ideal"), are each in itself one, but by sharing in (*κοινωνία*) actions and bodies and *in one another* they are manifested in all sorts of ways; and so each of them, though really one, appears many. Plato had indeed not yet reached a stage in which he could accept any intermixture of *opposite* ideas (e.g. one and many, like and unlike); but we need not take this passage as suggesting an intermixture of the ideas of good and evil, just and unjust, *quâ* ideas, but only in the sense that the same action may be good and just in certain respects and evil and unjust in others, and clearly in the sense that the ideas of the just and of the good (or of the unjust and the evil) are intermingled in the same action. What Plato seems to mean is that in phenomenal things we find not merely a single idea manifested in all the members of a class, but that variety also arises from the possibility of the ideas being combined with one another in different ways. The Atomists explained the diversity of the sensible world by the different combinations of their atoms (which Democritus, as we have seen, called "ideas," *ἰδέαι*), and used the analogy of the letters of the alphabet, which by different combinations can form an infinite diversity of words. Plato might (though he does not) have used the same illustration to explain the diversity of the sensible world by the various interminglings of his ideas.

At the end of the sixth book of the *Republic* we have the suggestion of a hierarchy of ideas, but the notion is

not worked out. Throughout all this stage of his philosophy Plato seems chiefly concerned to assert that ideas are, and that the only true knowledge consists in rising from particulars to them: their relation to phenomena and their relation to one another had not yet become for him prominent problems.

There can be little doubt that books v.-vii. of the *Republic* give us Plato's most accurate statement of what may be called his middle period, and they were probably written later than any of the other books — perhaps later even than the tenth book, and very shortly before his sixtieth year (368 B.C.)⁽¹⁶⁾. In these books "the Idea of the Good" occupies a supreme position above all the others. It is the ultimate unity and explanation of all knowledge, and it is the source of all knowing and of all being, and higher even than being itself (*Rep.* vi. 509 B)⁽¹⁷⁾. It is Plato's philosophical expression for the one ultimate principle of the universe. Elsewhere he is content to speak in language more familiar to ordinary use but, therefore, more mythological. In the tenth book of the *Republic* the "Nature-worker" is spoken of as making the ideas; and the example taken is the idea of a bed or couch, which is "imitated" by the carpenter, whose imitation is in turn imitated by the painter, who makes a picture of a bed (596, 597). In the *Timæus* the Divine Artificer is said to make natural objects after the pattern of the Ideas (29 A). Neither passage should be taken quite literally: neither passage need be understood in such a way as to contradict the sixth book of the *Republic*. In the *Timæus* Plato is professedly not speaking with logical precision but narrating "a probable myth." In the tenth book of the

Republic his immediate object is not to expound the doctrine of Ideas, but to show that the representations of the artist are "the copy of a copy" of the ultimate truth; and an illustration from the idea of something the human artificer copies is therefore convenient for his purpose. Aristotle, indeed, says that the Platonic school do not recognise ideas of manufactured things, such as a house and a ring (*Met.* A 9. § 23, 991b, 6; M 5. § 9, 1080a, 5). In his stricter thinking Plato may have rejected the notion that there are ideas, in the fullest sense, of manufactured things, because there is no science that deals with artificial products. Scientific knowledge requires analysis of them into their elements. Thus a table, scientifically understood, must be thought of as having a certain shape and size and as made of a certain kind of tree, and of these there are ideas. The special idea of it as a table would have to be the end or purpose it serves—the "good" of it. If a carpenter has made what he calls a table and it will not stand steady nor hold things on it, we might say, "That is no table," or, in Platonic language, "This does not realise the idea of a table," or, more accurately, "It does not realise the idea of the good in the case of a table." "The idea of a table," if we use the phrase, is something composite which we can resolve into its form, its matter and its end or purpose. This analysis, however, implies a set of distinctions familiar enough to Aristotle, but which Plato does not seem to have formulated in technical terms till he wrote the *Philebus*. Nature to Plato is a system of ends. His vision of a perfect science of nature is one which should explain everything teleologically (cf. *Phædo*, 97-99); in other words, which should see

everything in the light of its good, or, as we might put it in more theological language, which should see everything from the point of view of the divine purpose, which alone gives the ultimate meaning of things. In the *Timæus* this is put in the familiar form of the story of Creation. "The Artificer was good and wished to make all things as like himself as possible." We could translate this back into the language of the *Republic*, and say, "The Idea of the Good is manifested in the sensible world." The sensible world includes, of course, the works of human craftsmen; but we can hardly say that tables and beds and rings and houses manifest divine ideas in the same direct way that man does, who produces them for his own ends. They form only subordinate means towards the good or end for man.

A passage in the *Phædo* (100 B), where the ideas are referred to as "those familiar words which are in the mouth of everyone," seems to indicate that the doctrine was not regarded by Plato as peculiar to himself. It would certainly be readily adopted by Pythagoreans like Simmias, Cebes, and Echecrates. And probably most of Plato's disciples would take up the doctrine in its most Pythagorean aspects, being chiefly impressed by the more figurative and imaginative statements of it, like the majority of his readers in later ages. Nor can we suppose that Plato himself was entirely uninfluenced by his recourse to sensuous imagery, or that he always grasped the logical significance behind the external picture. As the theory became known and accepted in the Platonic school and outside it, the transcendence of the ideas, rather than their immanence, may have become the prominent part of the doctrine. "The friends of the ideas," who

are referred to in the *Sophistes* (248 A) as representing an extreme view which is criticised in that dialogue, most probably mean some of Plato's own school who had adhered to Plato's earlier form of statement, exaggerating its defects in the manner of admiring disciples, and sticking to the letter of mythical statements and poetical metaphors⁽¹⁸⁾.

The doctrine of Ideas has bulked so largely in expositions and criticisms of Plato from Aristotle's time downwards that we are apt to overlook the fact that, even in the dialogues where it is most emphasised, it is only a part, though in Plato's view a necessary part, of his theory of knowledge. It is, as already said, his answer to the question, How is knowledge possible? The sharp distinction drawn in the *Meno* between "opinion" and "knowledge" is further developed and elaborated in that part of the *Republic* which, as just said, is probably the latest and most complete exposition of his philosophy in its middle period. Within each of the two main divisions he distinguishes a lower and a higher grade. Within "opinion" there is a difference between the mere picturing or imaging of the external and superficial aspects of sensible things (*εἰκασία*) and a fuller acquaintance with them (*πίστις* = "belief"). Plato means, one may suppose, to distinguish between such knowledge as children have of things from their outward appearance, which can be shown in pictures, and the knowledge which the practical man of the world has, the kind of knowledge which the Sophists and Rhetoricians profess to teach, though they may, indeed, often remain in the region of mere appearance. There is a difference, we might say, between knowing things merely from pictures and plays and novel-read-

ing, and knowing them as the skilled craftsman, or man of business, or explorer, or politician knows them. But all these people are still—to use the famous allegory which Plato gives at the beginning of the seventh book—"within the cave." The mass of mankind see only the shadows on the wall, hear only the echoes of voices. When anyone turns round, still within the cave, he sees the figures that cast the shadows, but the figures are only images, like marionnettes, and the light that casts them is not the true sunlight, but the borrowed light of a fire; for the cave slopes steeply downward and the sunlight does not penetrate into it, and the upward ascent is hard and toilsome. When anyone has struggled up and won his way into the outer world, at first he is blinded by the daylight and can only look down and see the reflection of things in water and the shadows on the ground; but they are now the reflections and shadows of real things and cast by the true light, the light of the sun. And gradually the eye can look upwards and see the stars by night, and then afterwards learn to see everything in the full daylight, and at last, perhaps, to look on the sun itself.

The closing passage of the sixth book has given by anticipation the interpretation of this part of the allegory. The shadows of real things are the objects of the mathematical sciences; and this stage of intellectual development is the stage of the scientific understanding (*διάνοια*) in which the mind works accurately, but without going behind the assumptions or presuppositions (*ὑποθέσεις*) of each special science. Knowledge of the truest and highest kind must go beyond these assumptions and move only in a region of "ideas," seeing the relations between them. This is the work

of "dialectic" which is the "coping stone of the sciences," and sees things in their connection, not in their isolation, and the final aim of which is to see everything in the light of the central unity—the Idea of the Good, higher than all existence and the source of all knowing and of all being. Plato seems to make advancing knowledge consist in getting away more and more from the things of sense; but, when he tells us that the philosopher, compelled to go back into the cave to help his fellow-men, will, after his eyes are accustomed again to the darkness, be better able to measure and calculate and predict the moving shadows on the wall, does he not recognise in a figure and in his practical zeal for the reform of states that the highest knowledge is not cut off from the lower stages of picture-thinking and belief, but is the seeing clearly what others see darkly, the grasping in coherent and intelligible system what others see as a mere haphazard sequence of shadows? The science of mathematics had taught Plato the scientific value of abstraction; and in his account of philosophic thinking and the business of dialectic there is a wavering between (1) the view that philosophic thinking means merely a continually advancing process of abstraction till we reach the One, and (2) the more fruitful conception of philosophy as going beyond the abstractions of the sciences to reach a fuller and completer "synopsis" or synthesis.

CHAPTER V

THE "PARMENIDES" AND PLATO'S LATER IDEALISM

THE dialogue called *Parmenides* offers more difficult problems to the interpreter of Plato than any of his other works. Neo-Platonic enthusiasts found in its dry dialectic about the One and the Many an inner doctrine of mystical theology. Iamblichus declared that Plato's entire theory of philosophy was embodied in two dialogues—the *Parmenides* and the *Timæus* ⁽¹⁾. Proclus begins his lengthy commentary on the *Parmenides* with a prayer to all the heavenly hierarchy for guidance and inspiration. The modern student will hardly expect to find the secret of Plato revealed in any single book or in any one formula. If we accept the view that there must have been some growth, some development, in Plato's mind, the primary problem is an historical one, of which the ancient commentators never thought: How is the *Parmenides* related to the rest of Plato's dialogues? What is its place in the historical sequence? Does it exercise any influence on Plato's subsequent thinking, and of what nature? We can scarcely consider so elaborate a work a mere dialectic *tour de force*, to show how the author could argue against himself, or, as Grote suggests, a homage paid to the Greek sentiment of Nemesis ⁽²⁾—as if

Plato feared injury if he made his Socrates always victorious.

Let us see more precisely what the problem is. In the *Parmenides* Socrates as a very young man (127 c) is made the mouthpiece of the theory of ideas, in that very form in which we find it expressed in the *Republic* and the *Phædo*. This theory is then criticised by the aged Eleatic philosopher, Parmenides, who, along with his pupil Zeno, is on a visit to Athens. And—what is strangest about this criticism—the arguments used by Parmenides are mostly the very arguments used, or rather referred to, in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (A and M). Thus, if the dialogue is Plato's, we have the singular phenomenon of Plato criticising his own doctrine—the doctrine which nevertheless he seems to retain in the *Timæus*, a work which, on any theory of the order of the dialogues consistent with the genuineness of the *Parmenides*, must almost certainly be placed later than that dialogue. This criticism, moreover, is put into the mouth of the great Eleatic philosopher, and yet the conclusion of the dialectical arguments in the second part of the dialogue seems to be a refutation of the central Eleatic doctrine. An additional puzzle is the complete silence of Aristotle about the *Parmenides*: it is the only important dialogue of Plato's to which no allusion can be found in the whole body of Aristotelian writings⁽³⁾.

Now the readiest solution that might suggest itself as an escape from all these difficulties is the hypothesis that the dialogue is not Plato's, but the work of some adverse critic of the Platonic philosophy. But, as has already been pointed out (p. 21, above), the rejection of the *Parmenides* would involve the rejection of the

Sophistes also, which clearly alludes to it. The rejection of the *Sophistes* would involve the rejection of its sequel, the *Politicus*. There are, however, several probable allusions to both these dialogues in Aristotle, though without mention of Plato's name. The opening words of the *Politics* are an almost certain allusion to the doctrine of the *Politicus* (259), that rule over the household and rule over the state differ only in the number of the governed, so that the state is only a large household. The classification of governments which Aristotle adopts in the *Ethics* (*Eth. Nic.* viii. 10), and with which he starts in the *Politics* (iii. 7), modifying only the terminology, is precisely the classification given in the *Politicus* (291). Thus it would seem almost certain that the *Parmenides*, the *Sophistes*, and the *Politicus* must all be earlier than the time at which Aristotle wrote the *Politics*. If, then, Plato was not the author of these three metaphysical dialogues, who is this great unknown philosopher whose works were hidden under Plato's name by the careless avarice of the Platonic school, incorporating in the master's works an attack on his doctrine? (⁴). We might perhaps try the guess that he was some Megaric philosopher, as that school seem the most suitable critics of Eleatic doctrine from within; but we know too little about the Megarics, and the little we do know hardly agrees with such an hypothesis. If we were tempted, again, to fancy that it was Aristotle himself, to whom the ancient catalogues ascribe what was probably a dialogue called *Sophistes* and one called *Politicus*, fresh difficulties arise. For we can find nothing in the catalogues to correspond to the *Parmenides*. The dialogue "Concerning Philosophy,"

of which considerable fragments have been identified, is certainly not the *Parmenides*; and the work "Concerning the Idea" (or "the Ideas"), from its place in the catalogues does not seem to have been a dialogue. And, since the *Politics* of Aristotle criticises opinions maintained in the *Politicus*, we should only escape the difficulty of making Plato criticise himself by creating a greater difficulty with respect to Aristotle, who seems expressly to refer to the author of the *Politicus* as "one of our predecessors" (*Pol.* iv. 2. § 3, 1289b, 5). Again, we have Aristotle's express testimony to the Platonic authorship of the *Laws* (*Pol.* ii. 7. § 4, 1266b, 5; cf. 6. § 1, 1264b, 26), which seems to presuppose the *Politicus*, and which in style and manner seems farther away from the Plato who wrote the *Protagoras* and the *Euthydemus* than is the author of the *Parmenides*.

A second hypothesis is that of Hermann and others (already referred to, p. 14, above), which would place the metaphysical dialogues (*Theæt.*, *Parm.*, *Soph.*, *Pol.*) earlier than the *Phædrus*, *Republic*, and *Phædo*. They are supposed to belong to a "Megaric" period—and the introduction to the *Theætetus* is clearly an acknowledgment of Megaric influence—a period of dialectic and criticism before Plato had reached the constructive system which he expounds in the *Republic*. But we have already seen how many are the objections to this theory, and must regard it as untenable. As the doctrine of Ideas criticised in the *Parmenides* is the very doctrine expounded in the *Phædo* and *Republic*, we should have to suppose that Plato, without any apparent reason and without any apology, recanted his recantation, or else we should have to suppose that

Plato's most brilliant piece of philosophical criticism was not seriously meant. It might indeed be urged that the *Timæus*, which on the more recent theories, as well as on Hermann's, is later than the *Parmenides*, contains the doctrine of Ideas in a form open to the criticisms of that dialogue. But the cosmology of the *Timæus* is professedly a "probable myth," not a strict philosophical statement; it is a pictorial representation of what, in Plato's view, cannot be stated with certainty or exactness. The discourse is, moreover, put into the mouth of a Pythagorean, and therefore the ideal theory as introduced in the *Timæus* may reasonably retain marks of its earlier form, which was, according to the view I have taken, specially Pythagorean. And, if we go behind the pictorial form, the metaphysics of the *Timæus*, as will be pointed out, contains much that seems expressly intended to obviate the criticisms of the *Parmenides*. If we hold what seems the only tenable theory, that Plato after the *Parmenides* must have endeavoured to revise and reconstruct his doctrine, we should look for his "later theory of ideas" most of all in the *Philebus*, taking that as a clue to the *Timæus*, which otherwise is only a picture after Pythagorean models. The *Laws* is professedly on the level of popular thought, and cannot fairly be taken as evidence that Plato had surrendered the theory of ideas altogether.

The place we have seen reason to assign to the *Parmenides* in the sequence of Platonic writings compels us to hold that at the age of sixty he was willing to reconsider the theories of his middle life, and to show that in his later writings he attempted to remodel his doctrines so as to obviate criticisms whose force he

admitted. Some Platonic scholars have felt reluctant to admit that Plato at so mature an age could have turned his back on theories slowly arrived at and vigorously maintained⁽⁵⁾. But, in the first place, it is an exaggeration to speak of the criticisms of the *Parmenides* as requiring a desertion of his earlier views. And, secondly, if we accept the order and dates of the dialogues here adopted, we must conclude that Plato's intellectual growth had not been precocious, that what have been supposed to be youthful works, like the *Phædrus*, were composed when he was over forty, and that a philosopher who lived to over eighty years of age, working at intellectual subjects to the last, may well have possessed sufficient mental elasticity and youthfulness of spirit to make a fresh start at the age of sixty. Kant passed from "dogmatism" to criticism after many years of systematic and continuous university teaching and a life of routine, such as would be more apt to produce mental rigidity than would the voluntary discussions of the Platonic circle, interrupted by several absences from Athens; Kant's most important philosophical works were all written after he was fifty, and Kant did not enjoy the vigorous physical constitution of Plato nor live under so healthy a regimen as the Athenian philosopher.

The precise nature of the criticisms in the *Parmenides* must be more carefully considered in order to determine the extent and character of the change introduced into the Platonic theory. It is not easy to do this at once adequately and briefly; but the attempt must be made. The youthful Socrates—who must here be taken to represent the earlier phase of the Platonic development of the Socratic doctrine of uni-

versals—has got over the difficulties about the one and the many, so far as the phenomenal world is concerned. The individual Socrates, for instance, is both one and many: one as distinguished from other individuals, many as having a right side and a left side, a front and a back, etc. (*Parm.* 129 c. Cf. *Rep.* v. 479; vii. 523). But the *ideas* of one and many, like and unlike, rest and motion, and such other opposites, seem to him not to admit of admixture with one another. And it is just this fixity of the eternal ideas that seems to him the mode of escaping the puzzles which Zeno's dialectic had easily enough found in the acceptance of any absolute reality in the sensible things of ordinary understanding or of popular philosophy. In other words, Plato's doctrine seemed to reconcile Eleaticism, Heracliteanism, and Pythagoreanism, by assigning change and flux to the sensible world, keeping unity and fixity for the ideas, but recognising a plurality of ideas, separated off into pairs of absolutely distinguished opposites, like those which the Pythagoreans had enumerated in their list of good and evil things.

Now the first difficulty which Parmenides puts before Socrates relates to the number and extent of this world of ideas. Socrates's illustration has been taken from quasi-mathematical concepts, such as one, many, similar, dissimilar, rest, motion; and with these specially Pythagorean concepts Plato's mind had evidently worked most in thinking out his doctrine. Socrates has no hesitation in admitting also that there are ideas of qualities, such as the just, the beautiful, the good; and this is, of course, the part of the ideal theory which grows most directly out of the teaching of the historical Socrates. As to ideas corresponding to the

classes of visible natural objects Socrates has more hesitation: "I am often undecided whether to admit ideas, apart from the particulars, of man, fire, water, etc." And the hesitation becomes greater when Parmenides asks whether there are also ideas of hair, mud, and dirt. Socrates wishes to assign such mean and unworthy things to the world of appearance only, but he has felt the difficulty and sometimes thinks there must be an idea for every class of things that can be named, though shrinking from the consequences, and occupying himself most with the ideas of mathematical relations and moral qualities. "You are still young," says Parmenides, "and philosophy has not yet laid hold of you, as it will hereafter in my opinion lay hold of you, and then you will not despise any of these things. Your time of life makes you still pay regard to the opinions of people" (130 E). Now, if this rebuke and this prophecy mean anything, they mean that the reformed Platonic doctrine must involve an extended and not a restricted application of his earlier idealism—an effort to see the philosophical meaning and significance not merely of abstract mathematics and of morals, but of the world of natural objects and of what he had first contemned as unworthy of attention.

The other criticisms of Parmenides all turn on the difficulties of the relation between the ideas and the particular sensible things which they are intended to explain. Plato had spoken of things "participating" in ideas. "What is meant by this 'participation'?" asks Parmenides in the dialogue, exactly as Aristotle does in the *Metaphysics*. It is the puzzle which arises in every attempt to grapple with the logical theory of universals. In what way is the One *in* the Many? If

we recognise "real kinds," as scientific thinking seems to compel us to do, what are they? If we say the class is real and yet made up of particulars, that will raise difficulties exactly like those which Parmenides finds in the attempt of Socrates to treat the idea as spread out over the particular members of it—like a sail over a number of men, a simile such as underlies the logician's phrase "subsumption." That the idea or the class should be "one" and yet "many" is a real difficulty, so long as we keep the "one" and the "many"—identity and diversity—absolutely apart, and do not admit that the unity of a universal concept is a unity which includes difference in its very nature; otherwise we have always the unities of our ideal world confronting the multiplicities of the sensible. This seems to be the suggested lesson of the first criticism of "participation," though Plato does not explicitly draw it out.

The second criticism (132 A) is identical with that to which Aristotle alludes, as if it were a familiar argument, under the name of "the third man." If the ideas are simply posited alongside of the many particulars, what links the one with the many? The "idea of man" is posited to explain the common element in all men; what links this idea of man with the many men? We must posit some new common element, and so *ad infinitum*. The difficulty arises even more clearly, perhaps, if we take the formula which the Platonic Socrates also uses, and speak of the many particulars as "resembling" or "imitating" the idea which serves as the model (*παράδειγμα*), of which they may be said to be copies (132 E, 133 A).

The conceptualist way out of the difficulty about

universals had not escaped the notice of Plato. His Socrates suggests that the ideas may be thoughts only and have no other existence except in our minds. But to this it is objected that these thoughts, if they are to explain things, cannot be thoughts *of* nothing. If the universals of science are merely concepts, then the real world is resolved into mere concepts ("idealism" in Berkeley's sense, without Berkeley's God to supply objectivity), or the theory is meaningless. These thoughts of nothing will be "thoughtless" or foolish thoughts, as Plato puts it (132 B, C).

The last and greatest criticism is one often repeated by Aristotle—that the ideas, because separate from the world of sense, cannot be known by us and therefore explain nothing. Just as in the Kantian dualism, the intelligible world becomes the very world we cannot possibly understand. And if it is said that God knows the ideas, while we know only what is relative and phenomenal, this denies to us any real knowledge and denies also some kind of knowledge to God (133 B–134 E).

But the conclusion of all these arguments is not to make Plato give up the theory of ideas. If there be not an idea of every one individual thing (135 B), philosophy is impossible. What is needed then is not a renunciation, but a more thorough working out of the ideal theory by means of more adequate dialectic than the Platonic Socrates has yet employed. The specimen of dialectic which follows between Parmenides and "the young Aristoteles" is clearly meant to have some bearing on what goes before: and the conclusion of it is that difficulties arise from positing either that the One is, or that the One is not; or that the One is

one, or that the One is not one. That is to say, as he puts it more positively in the *Sophistes* (249 D), we must admit the unity of opposites even in the case of ideas: One and Many, Like and Unlike, Rest and Motion, Being and Not-Being, must not be treated as abstractly cut off from one another. We must admit, against the authority of Parmenides himself, that there is a sense in which Being is not, and Not-Being is.

What then is the result of this criticism on the theory of ideas, and what modifications should we expect to find in the dialogues which we have placed later than the *Parmenides*? On this question I find myself obliged to differ from many of those who arrange the dialogues in the same order, and who regard the *Parmenides* as marking a change in Plato's thought.

(1) The doctrine of ideas is certainly not given up, but is declared to be indispensable to the possibility of any certainty in knowledge, in language as decided as that used in the *Cratylus* (440 A-E) or the *Republic*. The fact that the Ideas are less named in the later dialogues than in the middle period should only lead us to look for the expression of the same doctrine under other terms. The subject-matter of the *Laws*, and the level of thought to which it professedly appeals, make it quite natural, as already said, that we should not look for the theory there.

(2) The later theory of ideas cannot be conceptualism, as has sometimes been suggested (⁶). This theory as a final solution is expressly repudiated in the *Parmenides*.

(3) Nor is the later theory a substitution of "transcendent" for "immanent" ideas. From the criticism of

the *Parmenides* we should expect the very reverse—an attempt to overcome the difficulties of an abstract separation of the ideas from the things they are meant to explain.

(4) The later theory cannot be a substitution of “ideals which things imitate” for “ideas in which things participate” or “which are manifested in things.” The two phrases, “imitation” and “participation,” are criticised by the very same argument which Aristotle alludes to as “the third man” (*Parm.* 132 A, D); and it may also be noted that, if Aristotle’s criticisms relate specially to the later form of the theory (which seems to me very doubtful), Aristotle cannot have believed in a change of this kind; for he puts the phrase “participation” (μετέχειν) and the phrase “ideals” (παραδείγματα) together in the same objection (*Met.* A 9. § 18, 991a, 21).

(5) The later theory cannot involve a restriction of the ideas to natural types such as organic species, and inorganic substances such as fire, flesh, etc. That these are the ideas specially mentioned in the *Timæus* arises merely from the subject-matter of that dialogue⁽⁷⁾. In the *Philebus* (15 A), as examples of ideas, “man,” “ox,” “beauty,” “good,” are all named together. The rebuke administered by Parmenides to the youthful Socrates leads us to expect an extension, not a restriction, of the theory.

(6) Plato seems to hold that the separateness of the ideas of opposites from one another (*Parm.* 129) goes along with and accounts for the separateness of the ideal from the phenomenal world, and that the difficulties arising from this latter dualism can only be got rid off by showing, in the cases of the ideas themselves

(i.e. on purely logical or metaphysical grounds), that the One *is* the Many, and that the Many *is* the One, that Being and Not-Being, Likeness and Unlikeness, Rest and Motion, are not absolutely exclusive of one another.

We should expect, then, to find the new metaphysics of the second part of the *Parmenides* and of the *Sophistes* accepted in the later dialogues, and applied to bridge over the gap between the intelligible and the sensible worlds. And this is precisely what we do find. In the *Philebus* (14-16) we have Plato's clearest and most explicit statement of the difference between his earlier and his later metaphysics. The old problem about the One and the Many was the problem of their combination in the world of phenomena. That difficulty has long ago been overcome (cf. *Parm.* 129 B), and does not now seem important to Plato compared with the deeper problem of the relation between the ideal unities and the multiplicity of the phenomenal world.

In the earlier stages of his theory of ideas Plato had been content to assert the reality of a world of unities (*ἐνάδες* or *μονάδες* he calls them in the *Philebus*, 15 A) over and above and apart from the world of phenomena; but all along he meant them to explain that world, and spoke of them as "present in (or 'with') things," and of things as participating in them. The separation (*τὸ χωρίζειν*, as Aristotle calls it) was more in the mythical or pictorial expression than in the essence of his thought; and the new dialectic is in one way but a development of the old. Still he had left a gap which caused difficulties. He now sees that, if he is really to explain the world of sense, and if he is really to explain the possibility of error (for to say

that all that we know is illusory would be to abolish all distinction between truth and error, as much as to say that all appearance is true), he must overcome the absolute antithesis between Being and Not-Being, the One and the Many, the Permanent and the Changing, which he had inherited from the Eleatics. Plato's later philosophy is the attempt to do this. The problem is stated and, so far, solved metaphysically in the *Sophistes* and the *Philebus*. The *Timæus* puts the solution in the form of a myth, which we must interpret, so far as we can, in the light of the more strictly philosophical statements. Plato's various attempts to deal with this problem of Matter (in the Aristotelian sense) are all of one and the same kind. Mere space or "that in which" phenomena come into being is "the other" (θάτερον), which must be combined with "the same" (ταὐτόν), in order that any concrete thing may exist (*Timæus*). The "more or less" or "unlimited" of the *Philebus* is the same notion. So is "the others" (ἄλλα), as opposed to the One, in the *Parmenides*. So is "the Not-Being, which in some way must be" of the *Sophistes* (241 D). And "the indefinite dyad" (or "twoness"), which, though not a Pythagorean formula (*Arist. Met. A* 6. § 10, 987b, 26), is a formula in Pythagorean fashion, must be regarded as but another attempt, though not used in any of Plato's writings, to express the same notion. In the *Republic* (v. 477 A) Plato had been content to assign Not-Being to Ignorance: it was the unknown and unknowable, *i.e.* the absolutely meaningless and unreal. Now he has come to recognise that it must in some way or other be known "by a kind of spurious thought" (λογισμῷ τινὶ νόθῳ, *Tim.* 52 B).

Thus Plato in his later philosophy has acquired an interest in the necessarily imperfect world of "becoming" which he had previously rather tended to despise. Hence his non-Socratic attempt to construct, though with apologies, a philosophy of Nature. Hence his concessions to human infirmities and ignorance in the *Laws*. In other words, Plato has advanced a great way in the direction of what became Aristotle's philosophical position. Plato has not given up the doctrine of Ideas; but we hear less about them, partly because the carrying out of his great principle of the manifestation of the ideas has become more important than the mere assertion of their reality. The assertion of their reality is not now put forward as in itself a solution. We hear more of the problem of systematic classification. Its importance had already been asserted in the *Phædrus* (265 E); but the *Sophistes* and the *Politicus* and the *Philebus* (cf. 16 C, D) are the first serious attempts to deal with it. The seeming artificiality of their divisions and subdivisions must not blind us to the historical significance of this endeavour to carry out into minute detail this "distinction of things according to their kinds," which already in earlier dialogues he had pronounced to be the business of dialectic. The Aristotelian "Categories" may be found in germ in these later dialogues (cf., e.g., *Tim.* 37 A, B). The *Philebus*, again, almost formulates Aristotle's doctrine of "the four causes" (23 C-E). But in all this the doctrine of Ideas is not surrendered. It merely takes on a new form. The "limit" (πέρας) of the *Philebus* is the world of Ideas⁽⁸⁾. We are expressly told in this dialogue (16 c) that all the things we speak of are compounded of limit and the unlimited. This is

just the Aristotelian conception of the individual thing as a combination of form and matter. But the language of Plato remains more distinctly Pythagorean than Aristotle would approve; and this Pythagorean aspect of Plato's theory was what probably affected most strongly that group of his disciples who fell back on a semi-mystical use of mathematical formulæ instead of advancing to the modern science of Aristotle. The "ideal numbers" are expressly said by Aristotle (*Met.* M 4. § 2, 1078b, 11) to be an addition to the doctrine of "those who originally maintained that there were ideas." We have, moreover, Aristotle's testimony to the Pythagorising tendencies of Speusippus. (See below, p. 185.)

If we put together the various modes of expression that we find Plato adopting in his later dialogues to describe the relation between the ideas which are the object of philosophical knowledge and the fleeting and changing world that is known to the senses and to ordinary opinion, I think we are entitled to say that for a hard-and-fast dualism Plato has been endeavouring to substitute a doctrine of degrees in reality. The phrase is not his, but it seems to sum up the result of what he holds. And if this interpretation of his later doctrine can be adopted, it helps to remove a great many of the difficulties which Platonic scholars have raised about the apparent inconsistencies in various statements of his theory. Are there ideas of manufactured things? Not in the same full sense as that in which there are ideas of organic species or of moral qualities or mathematical relations. (See above, p. 98.) Are there ideas of things evil and imperfect? In his earlier statements of his theory Plato had spoken as

if opposites such as good and evil, just and unjust, beautiful and ugly, stood on the same level—taking a somewhat abstractly logical view of the problem. Now, with his attempt to recognise the relative reality of not-being, he can allow better for grades of perfection and imperfection. The world of sense is not an illusion, but can be known in varying degrees in proportion as it contains more of definiteness and perfection, or more of the unlimited and imperfect. The imperfect can never be as fully known or possess the same reality (or, we should rather say, the same "validity") as the perfect. But still, so far as we know anything, we know its idea. We know an imperfect state or society, for instance, not as a mere anarchical chaos, but as having a kind of form or system which admits of more or less adequate description. This, I think, was implicitly recognised in the account of the corrupt states in the *Republic*, which were not merely put aside as no states at all; but the theory of knowledge which justified this treatment was, I think, only arrived at later (⁹).

No more can be said here about the relation of the *Parmenides* to Plato's other works. There remains the difficult question of its relation to the criticisms in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. What is to be said of the silence of Aristotle respecting the *Parmenides*, while he reproduces its very arguments? The only satisfactory solution seems to me to be that the arguments were Aristotle's own to begin with. The arguments, as we have them in the *Metaphysics*, are, many of them, spoken of as if they were old familiar criticisms. Alexander of Aphrodisias, the greatest of the ancient commentators on Aristotle (*circ.* 200 A.D.), tells

us that these arguments had been used in a work "Concerning Ideas," which may have been composed long before the rough, ill-edited jottings which are called the *Metaphysics* were written down by Aristotle—if indeed they were written by him, and not merely taken down from his lectures. Aristotle came to Athens, according to the best authenticated account, in the year 367 B.C., at the age of seventeen. Plato was probably still absent in Sicily when he arrived, and he may have found the doctrines of Plato's middle period taught and accepted within the Academy in that more dogmatic form which an original philosophy so quickly takes among admiring disciples. It has been objected that, even within the next few years, Aristotle was still too young to have made himself the critic of Plato, and a critic to whom Plato was ready to listen⁽¹⁰⁾. The objection seems to me invalid. Berkeley at the age of twenty was criticising Locke in his commonplace book; Hume had published his most elaborate philosophical work at twenty-eight. Need we be astonished if a Greek youth of eighteen or nineteen, and that youth Aristotle, with that keen eager temperament of his, which may have helped to wear out his body sooner than Plato's, should have shown similar precocity, and raised difficulties (ἀπορίαι) sufficient to induce Plato, who had never yet shown any trace of "dogmatic slumber," to reconsider some of his earlier solutions? And, as already said, Plato's recent absence from Athens, the interruption in his regular teaching, and his possible association with the Eleatic school during his visit to the west, may have made him the more ready to make a fresh start in his attempt to deal with the problem of knowledge. It is not neces-

sary, indeed, to suppose that Aristotle "published" a controversial volume at once: it is absurd to think that all controversy within the Platonic circle, or even in Athens generally, would be carried on by the dull medium of books, while it was possible to have the living interchange of thought which Plato preferred to the written word, that cannot answer a question (cf. *Phædr.* 275 D).

It would fit in with the view that the criticisms of the *Parmenides* owed something at least to the objections raised by Plato's brilliant pupil, if we could suppose Plato to be alluding to him by introducing among the persons of the dialogue "the young Aristoteles, who was afterwards one of the Thirty." "I noticed your deficiency in dialectic," says Parmenides to Socrates, "when I heard you talking here with your friend Aristoteles the day before yesterday" (135 D). The young Aristoteles is chosen as the respondent in the dialectic discussion with Parmenides; and, it may be noted, he is evidently very ready to undertake the business (137 C). Now, if the youthful Socrates is here the representative of Plato's own earlier views, and the venerable Parmenides stands for the more developed dialectic which makes Plato remodel his theories, why may not "the young Aristoteles" be a kindly allusion to the argumentative youth who helped to put Plato on a fresh track? The conjecture is a very tempting one, and has occurred to several Platonic scholars⁽¹¹⁾; but most of them have thought that Plato did not accept the criticisms of Aristotle, or that he supposed he had answered them without altering the theory of ideas maintained in the *Republic*. In that view, as has been shown, I cannot agree. The theory that the arguments

in the first part of the *Parmenides* were originally suggested—in part at least—by our Aristotle, does not stand or fall with this guess about Plato's reason for introducing a young Aristoteles—a possible contemporary of the youthful Socrates—among the persons of the dialogue. The name "Aristoteles" would have a less definite suggestiveness to an Athenian about 365 B.C. than it has to us. Diogenes Laertius mentions eight Aristotles who attained distinction⁽¹²⁾.

But if the criticisms of Aristotle led Plato to a modification of his theory, and if the later idealism of Plato approaches Aristotelianism in many respects, how are we to explain the hostile criticism contained in the *Metaphysics*? In the first place, it should be noticed that the criticism is within the school. In Book A the Platonists are spoken of as "we." (In the parallel passage in Book M the Platonists are "they." Possibly this is a version by a pupil who had not Aristotle's personal affection towards his master.) Furthermore, it must be observed that there are several indications that the persons criticised were not united in opinion. It is not one uniform doctrine that is discussed, but a doctrine with several different and inconsistent forms (cf. *Met.* A 9. §§ 6, 7, 990b, 11 seq.: note the word *τινές*; 9. § 37, 992a, 32). So that the criticisms must not be taken as necessarily referring to Plato himself. The only dialogue of Plato's referred to by name in the criticism of the doctrine of Ideas is the *Phædo*, which contains the earlier and not the later form of the theory. Thus, unless we suppose that this part of the *Metaphysics* was simply edited from early papers of Aristotle's, such as the lost work "Concerning Ideas," we may suppose that Aristotle had found it necessary

to recall these objections even in the lectures of his latest years, because reactionary "friends of ideas," such as even Plato had had to criticise (*Soph.* 248 A), were still prominent in the contemporary Academy. Again, so far as the arguments may be directed against Plato himself, we must remember the general character of Aristotle's method of criticism. Just because of his nearness in thought to his master, he is concerned to bring out differences; and, what is most important of all, all the criticisms are dialectical. The method of the Platonic dialogue survives in the Aristotelian lecture or treatise. All possible difficulties are brought forward in order that accepted opinions may be thoroughly tested and the truth reached through intellectual conflict (cf. *Eth. Nic.* vii. 1. § 5, 1145b, 2). Because Aristotle raises objections to a statement, it does not follow that he regards it as entirely mistaken. In the *Politics*, where the subject-matter has not the obscurity of the *Metaphysics*, we find Aristotle himself adopting a proposal to which he had raised objections when he found it in Plato's *Laws*—objections, too, which Plato had really done something to meet (cf. *Pol.* ii. 6. § 15, 1265b, 24; vii. 10. § 11, 1330a, 14; *Pl. Leg.* v. 745 c; vi. 776 A). But the whole question of Aristotle's criticism of Plato would require fuller and separate discussion⁽¹³⁾.

There are other problems which can be raised about the names in the *Parmenides*—other than those arising out of the possible allusion to Aristotle. The whole discussion is supposed to be reported by Plato's half-brother in the presence of his full-brothers to certain visitors from Clazomenæ. The name of Clazomenæ suggests Anaxagoras to us. Can Plato have meant to

indicate that in his family circle, *i.e.* in his philosophical school, was the meeting-place of Ionian and Eleatic and Socratic thought? This may be thought too fanciful; and in any case such guesses admit of no verification. A more important and profitable question is this: Why does Parmenides, after criticising Socrates, proceed by the use of Zenonian dialectic to overthrow the strict Eleatic doctrine and to conclude that the One and "the others" both are and are not? Why, again, is it an Eleatic Stranger who in the *Sophistes* finds himself compelled to criticise his "father Parmenides" and to argue that in some sense Being is not and Not-Being is? (241 D). Surely Plato means by this that a more thoroughgoing application of dialectic leads to the correction of the onesidedness of the earlier doctrine. This applies to Eleaticism; and it applies to his own doctrine of Ideas. If Parmenides may be represented reforming Eleatic doctrine by applying his pupil's dialectic, may not Plato use a pupil's criticisms for the correction and development of his own doctrine? The wisest teacher is he who has not lost the art of learning: and the criticisms of a bright pupil are perhaps the most valuable.

CHAPTER VI

THE "TIMÆUS"

THE Neo-Platonists regarded the *Timæus* as the most important of Plato's works, and it was certainly the source from which flowed what later times regarded as Platonism. In the Latin version made by Chalcidius (probably in the sixth century A.D.) it passed to the Middle Ages and was almost the only work of Plato's known to Western Christendom until the Italian Renaissance⁽¹⁾. And even the revival of the study of Plato in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was made under the light or shadow of Neo-Platonic interpretations. In Raphael's "School of Athens" Plato is represented with the *Timæus* in his hand; and this fitly symbolises the way in which Plato was regarded from the Alexandrian age until within the last hundred years. A modern editor of the book has said correctly, "Not one of Plato's writings exercised so powerful an influence on subsequent Greek thought"—and for "Greek" we might almost substitute "human"; but when Mr. Archer Hind goes on to say that "the *Timæus* furnishes us with a master-key whereby alone we may enter into Plato's secret chambers," he is echoing the Neo-Platonic opinion, but disregarding the express warnings of Plato himself. The discourse of

the Pythagorean Timæus professes at the most to be only a "probable fable" (εἰκότα μῦθον, 29 D)—a "myth" of the same kind as the myths of the *Phædrus*, *Phædo*, *Republic*, and *Politicus*, though it is much more elaborately worked out and with more deference to the science of the age. The various inconsistencies between the cosmologies of these dialogues show how little claim is made to literal accuracy in such matters. Strict knowledge can only be of the eternal and immutable; the world of becoming, the process of evolution as we should say, belongs to the region of "Opinion" or "Belief."

"If Socrates," says Timæus, "after so many men have said so many things about the gods and the generation of the universe, we should not be able to render an account everywhere and in all respects consistent and accurate, let no one be surprised. But if we can produce one as probable as any other, we must be content, remembering that I who am the speaker and you who are the judges are only men; so that on these matters we should be satisfied with the probable tale and seek nothing further" (29 C, D).

The elaboration of a theory of the physical universe is but a recreation from meditation about eternal things, a sober and moderate amusement which brings no remorse in its train (59 C). From Plato's own point of view the *Timæus* is a mere out-building and by no means the central shrine of his philosophy⁽²⁾. Yet, apart from the significance which the work acquired in the subsequent development of Platonism, it has a two-fold interest for the modern student—(1) It occupies an important place in the history of ancient science, and it is because of the various theories contained in it

about natural phenomena that it received so much attention from Aristotle; and (2) if we treat it as an exoteric and not as an esoteric exposition of philosophy, it gives us one aspect of the latest form of Plato's thought.

Plato did not think it possible to attain more than probable hypotheses about the physical composition of the universe, the movements of the stars, and the structure of animal bodies. Yet we need not doubt that he gives us what he considered to be the best hypotheses that he knew of on these subjects. It is Pythagorean natural philosophy, but modified apparently by Plato's own reflection and observations. In many details the *Timæus* does not agree with what is to be found in those fragments of Philolaus which have most claim to authenticity; and this disagreement is indeed a reason for supposing that these fragments may be genuine and not post-Platonic. It was clearly choice and not incapacity which kept Plato from occupying himself with speculations about the visible universe. He had not, indeed, Aristotle's vivid and eager interest in the animal world. Though he is more in accordance with modern science than Aristotle, when (perhaps following Alcmaeon, the physician of Croton, a younger contemporary of Pythagoras⁽³⁾) he makes the head and not the heart the seat of intelligence, this is but a happy guess based on fancies, such as the spherical shape of the skull—the sphere being the most perfect figure—and its position of honour at the upper end of the body in man. This was taken to symbolise the exaltation of reason over passion and appetite, which are located respectively in the breast and below the diaphragm. Aristotle's mistaken theory that the heart

was the common sensorium was made and defended in a more scientific spirit than that which regulated the psychological physiology of the *Timæus*. On the other hand, it shows a real grasp of the ultimate problems of science that Plato attempted to go behind the four elements of Empedocles, and to regard them as the differentiated forms of one indeterminate matter or potentiality (if we may use Aristotle's more technical phrase), the difference between fire, air, water, and earth depending upon difference in mathematical character. Plato's best claim to a notable place in the history of natural science rests, not on stray anticipations of particular modern theories, but on his attempt to apply mathematics at once to the ultimate particles of matter, to the explanation of musical sounds, and to the movements of the heavenly bodies. "Plato," says Jowett, "did more for physical science by asserting the supremacy of mathematics than Aristotle and his disciples by their collections of facts." In such a statement there is perhaps some exaggeration; for the Pythagoreans had anticipated Plato (as he himself acknowledges) in proclaiming the supremacy of mathematics; and the Aristotelian passion for facts is a necessary condition of scientific progress.

In Plato's view the two great branches of applied mathematics were Astronomy and Harmonics (*Rep.* vii. 528 E-531 C); and so in the *Timæus* the distances of the celestial spheres from each other are proportioned to the different lengths of the strings which produce the various musical notes. This may seem mystical, but it was a fancy of the same kind which guided Kepler in his study of the heavens⁽⁴⁾. Plato's astronomy is always astronomical speculation and not astro-

logy. The phenomena of the heavenly bodies are regulated by fixed laws, and only appear to be portents to "those who can *not* calculate their motions" (40 D). So it stands in the best MS., and the omission of the "not" in the others may be set down to the work of copyists who lived under astrological beliefs. Plato, again, does not deny the possibility of divination; but he ascribes it to the lower and not to the higher faculties of the soul. "Herein is a proof," he says, "that God has given the art of divination to the foolishness [and not to the wisdom] of man. No man, when in his wits, attains true and inspired divination, but when the power of his understanding is fettered in sleep or by disease or if he is demented by some divine possession" (*ἐνθουσιασμός*, *Tim.* 71 E). The prophet is akin to the madman (*μαντική* to *μανική*, *Phædr.* 244 C) (⁵). But the interpretation of prophecy requires the use of rational intelligence.

The traditional theogonies are referred to only in passing, and with a clear note of irony. Those who have told us about the generation of the gods profess to be the sons of gods; and they must surely know about their own forefathers (40 D, E). Plato's cosmogony or cosmology may be fanciful, but it is not "superstitious," as Bacon calls it. Thus the unity of the cosmos is maintained (perhaps against Democritus) not as a theological dogma but as the more probable hypothesis on physical grounds (55 C, D). As a matter of philosophy (or, as we should say, of metaphysics), Plato has no doubt of the ultimate unity of the universe, "which is one and only begotten" (31 B); but in the region of physical science we are in the region of probability, and must not settle questions dogmatically. On another important point Plato

comes into conflict with the Atomists. They had accepted the popular notion of an absolute "up" and "down" in the universe. This Plato rejects (62 c). It is inconsistent with the notion of the universe as spherical. It is inconsistent also with the notion of the earth as spherical, a solid body in equilibrium in the centre (whether fixed or rotating—a matter on which Plato has used an unfortunately ambiguous word, which may mean either "revolving" or "close pressed" round the axis of the universe)⁽⁶⁾. The Atomists, with scientific consistency, rejected the notion of Antipodes; Plato, with scientific consistency, accepts it. The unscientific thing would be to believe in an absolute up and down and yet to accept the notion of Antipodes; for that would involve contradiction.

The details of the astronomy and of the physiology of the *Timæus* belong to the history of natural science, and could only be discussed profitably in the light of what went before—the speculations of Empedocles and of the Atomists, the theories of Alcmaëon the physician of Croton, the Pythagorean astronomy, and the controversies of ancient medicine buried in the writings of various schools ascribed to Hippocrates. A mere comparison of what Plato says with what school children are taught nowadays about the physical universe is curious but unprofitable. The real interest of the *Timæus* is to be found, where Plato intended it to be found, not in the more or less lucky guesses about natural phenomena, but in the philosophical conceptions, of which the cosmological myth is a pictorial and inadequate expression. The early philosophers of Greece had unconsciously been dealing with logical and metaphysical problems, while seeking to

explain the physical world. Apparently in Heraclitus and Parmenides there was a glimmering recognition of the ontological significance of cosmological phrases. The age of the Sophists had made questions about human knowledge, *i.e.* questions of logic, prominent. Plato saw clearly the metaphysical aspects of the old controversies between Ionian and Italian philosophers, and, when he himself deals with physical problems, he is consciously transferring the questions about the One and the Many from the region of logic or metaphysics to the sphere of the world of becoming. The *Timæus* is Plato's attempt to show *how* the One appears as Many, *how* Being manifests itself as Becoming: it is a figurative solution of the antinomy between Eleaticism and Heracliteanism, which had already occupied him under different forms in his more important writings. To tell how God created the world is, in Platonic language, to struggle by a myth or tale to express the relation of the One to the Many—the problem with which the *Parmenides* left us. Being cannot be abstract unity, simply excluding and separate from the manifold particulars; the manifold cannot be merely manifold and destitute of unity. Either alternative makes all definite assertion and therefore all science and philosophy impossible. The One *is* Many, and the Many One. This was the conclusion to which the *Parmenides* pointed. But how? Thought and language seem unfit for the task of explaining; and Plato takes temporary refuge in a parable. But to penetrate to his philosophical meaning we must go behind the mythological phrases. And yet it is these mythological phrases which have had the profoundest influence on later theologies and theosophies—

"Let me tell you then why the Creator made this world of generation. He was good and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being without jealousy he desired that all things should be as like unto himself as possible. This is in the truest sense the origin of becoming and of the universe, as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of wise men. For God desiring that all things should be good and that, so far as might be, there should be nothing evil, having received all that is visible not at rest but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, brought it from disorder into order, considering that this was in every way better than the other. Now it neither has been nor is it right for the Best to do aught but what is the fairest; and the Creator, reflecting on the things that are by nature visible, found that no unintelligent creature, taken as a whole, was fairer than the intelligent taken as a whole, and that intelligence could not be present in anything that was devoid of soul. For which reason, when he was framing the universe, he put intelligence in soul and soul in body, that he might be the maker of a work that was by nature fairest and best. Wherefore, using the language of probability, we may say that the universe became a living creature in very truth, possessing soul and reason by the providence of God" (29 D-30 B).

"God made the soul in origin and in excellence prior to and older than the body, to be the ruler and mistress, of whom the body was to be the subject. And he framed her out of the following elements and on this wise. From the undivided and ever changeless substance, and also out of that which becomes divided in material bodies, he compounded a third and intermediate

form of Existence (*οὐσία*), partaking of the nature of the Same and of the Other. . . . He took the three elements of the Same, the Other, and Existence, and mingled them into one form, compressing by force the nature of the Other, hard to mingle, into the Same" (34 B-35 A).

"And when the Father who begat it perceived the created image of the eternal gods that it had motion and life, he was well pleased, and in his joy bethought him to make it yet more nearly like its pattern. Now, whereas that is a living being eternally existent, even so he sought to make the universe (*τόδε τὸ πᾶν*) eternal as far as might be. Now the nature of this [ideal] being was eternal; but to bestow this attribute in its fulness on a created being was impossible; so he bethought him to make a moving image of eternity, and while he was setting in order the heavens (*οὐρανός*)⁽⁷⁾, he made of eternity that abides in unity an eternal image, even that which we call Time. For whereas days and nights and months and years were not before the heavens came into being, he then devised the generation of them along with the fashioning of the heavens. And all these are portions of time, and 'was' and 'shall be' are forms of time that have come to be, although we unconsciously transfer them to the eternal Existence, and are wrong in so doing; for we say that it was and is and shall be, but in truth 'is' alone belongs to it, and 'was' and 'shall be' are fit to be applied only to Becoming which moves in time, for they are movements. . . . Time then has come into being along with the heavens, that being generated together, together also they may be dissolved, if a dissolution of them should ever come to pass; and it

was made after the pattern of the eternal nature, that it might be as like to it as possible" (37 c-38 B).

"Having received all mortal and immortal creatures, and being thereby replenished, this universe (*κόσμος*) has thus come into being, a living creature and visible, containing the things that are visible, the image of its Maker [*or* the image of the Intelligible]⁽⁸⁾, a god perceptible, greatest and best, most beautiful and most perfect, this one only-begotten heaven" (92 c).

In such passages may be seen the germs of phrases and ideas which were to grow into prominence in later Platonism and in the creeds and controversies of Christendom. Some Christian theologians and philosophers have even been disposed to exaggerate the affinity between Plato and themselves. When Plato speaks of the inclination of the ecliptic to the equator as like the letter x (the Greek *Ch*), the fancy of the Christian apologist, Justin Martyr, sees a forecast of the doctrine of the Cross. Plato's words are, "He bent it [*i.e.* the soul of the universe, made up of the Same and the Other and 'Existence'] in the form of the letter x" (*Tim.* 36 B). Justin takes this to be spoken of the Son of God, and to mean, "He placed him crosswise in the universe," and to be borrowed by Plato from Moses, whose brazen serpent prefigured the Cross of Christ⁽⁹⁾. Not only among Alexandrian Christians, but among writers of a later age, the Platonic Trinity has been much spoken of. What might most truly be called the Platonic Trinity is the synthesis of the Same and the Other, of the One and the Many, which in his later philosophy Plato had discovered to be the only escape from the difficulties of an abstract dualism, such as his earlier theory had

suggested. But those who have spoken of the Platonic Trinity have more commonly thought of such triads as God (or "the One"), Reason, the Soul; or the Idea of the Good, the Demiurgus, and the World-Soul, which introduce or suggest the notion of emanation or a descending scale. In the *Second Epistle* (which has of all the *Epistles* perhaps the least claim to be genuine or even an early forgery) there is an enigmatic utterance (312 E) about a first, the king of all, and a second and a third—a passage which Clement of Alexandria interprets as applying to the Christian Trinity⁽¹⁰⁾. When Plato is studied in a more historical spirit than was possible to the Apologists of the second and third centuries, or to the Neo-Platonists of ancient or modern times, we do not look for such precise anticipations of Christian beliefs. The specifically Christian doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation are not to be found in Plato; but the *Timæus* undoubtedly furnished indirectly a large part of the metaphysical framework of Christian thought.

If we consider the *Timæus* simply in relation to Plato's own theory of knowledge, we find our best clue to its interpretation in the dry, technical language of the *Philebus*. The Divine Artificer of the *Timæus* is the "Reason" or "Intelligence" of the *Philebus*—the efficient cause of all things. The "Limit" and "Unlimited" of the *Philebus* appear in the *Timæus* as "the Same" and "the Other." The "One" and the "Indefinite Dyad," to which Aristotle refers as a Platonic doctrine, though it is not found in the works of Plato, must be another expression of the same antithesis, moulded after a Pythagorean model. The trinity of Same, Other, and Existence, or Limit, Unlimited, and

the Compound of the two, expresses the principle that everything actually existing in the world of time and space, and that world itself as a whole, must be regarded as a combination of an ideal element—that element which alone can be truly known or thought—and the matter or formless element which is necessary to temporal and spatial existence, but which makes it impossible for us to know any concrete particular thing completely.

In speaking pictorially Plato has to use the language of time and space; and thus he lays himself open to the objection that he seems to make the universe created in an already existing time and in an already existing space; but, if we translate his thoughts out of metaphor into logic, what he clearly means is that time and space are the necessary conditions of any manifestation or appearance whatever of the one absolute reality. It may be asked, "Why should the One appear as many? why should God make a world in which, because it is a world of manifold particular existence, there must necessarily be imperfection and evil?" Plato's mythical or theological answer is simply: God is good and desired to make everything as like himself as possible, but absolute perfection of every particular is impossible. In the Leibnizian phrase (so apt to be misunderstood) the world is the best of all *possible* worlds, many things that seem abstractly possible not being "compossible." The completeness of the world requires the existence of varying grades of beings, as Plato puts it (*Tim.* 41 B, C) in language that almost seems to anticipate Spinoza and Leibniz⁽¹¹⁾. What in the *Philebus* was called the Unlimited (Indefinite), or "the more and less," is in

the *Timæus* identified with Space—that mere vague empty nothing in which nevertheless all things are.

We must go behind Plato's picture. "The One is in some way the Many" (the conclusion to which he had come in the *Parmenides* and the *Sophistes*) means that the existence of a world at all is not dependent on the arbitrary choice of a particular being, but that the only real world we can perceive and know, the only existence or reality (οὐσία), is a unity which includes difference in it, a multiplicity which is nevertheless a unity—a One and Eternal necessarily and eternally (cf. *Tim.* 37 D, αἰώνιον εἶκόνα) manifested in Time and Space: or, more in the phraseology of the *Philebus*, the real is always a synthesis of Limit (Form) and the otherwise Unformed.

What in the earlier dialogues were called the Ideas are less prominent in the later group of writings. It seems quite clear, however, that the Ideas must be identified with the formal element—i.e. with "the Same" or "the Limit." That alone is what we truly know. The formless element is necessary to the concrete phenomenal existence of anything; but *per se* it cannot be known. It can be apprehended, not by sense, but by "a kind of bastard thinking" (λογισμῷ τινὶ νοθῷ, *Tim.* 52 B), i.e. it is the mere "other" or extreme contrary of all we can properly know. In order, however, that we may know "Ideas" (in the plural) there must be some otherness in the One itself. The Same and the Other are not heterogeneous things artificially brought together. As Plato came to see in his later philosophy, even in the region of Ideas the opposites One and Many, Same and Other, must be united.

Our knowledge has degrees, and existence has

degrees. The relations of abstract number we can know most completely and exactly. As we descend into the concrete and material our knowledge becomes more and more incomplete and inadequate, till we come to the mere empty space—the not-being—which, however, we have found necessary to the definite existence of anything. The logical position is almost precisely that of Aristotle: form is what we know; the combination of form and matter is what exists. To understand anything fully we must not merely know its material conditions. These are merely “con-causes” (*συναιτίαι*, *Tim.* 46 D). We must know it also from the point of view of its end—what Plato had called the Idea of the Good in the *Republic*, what is here figured as the will of the Creator. Plato may not seem to have solved the problem of evil, nor that of individual existence—the problems that confront every theory that begins by assuming the Unity of the Absolute. But to Plato all philosophy is the passionate desire for unity, and so we cannot accept any final solution of a Dualist or Pluralist kind. And we may well ask whether any philosopher or theologian has gone much beyond Plato in these matters or has found any other answer than his, except by giving up the problem or by constructing what Plato would have called “myths” or tales—treating of human free-will as something independent of Divine will, or supposing some evil being who out of purposed malice frustrates the work of a benevolent Creator.

Plato has not deserted the theory of ideas. We hear indeed in the *Timæus* only of ideas of organic beings and of elements like fire—but that is simply because he is here dealing with nature and not with ethics

or the theory of knowledge. There is an idea of every class of things just in so far as and according to the degree in which we can intelligently think and know these things. Both the One and the Many, the Same and the Other, enter into the Ideas, because these are Ideas and not merely the abstract One—the one Idea of the Good. Yet all the many ideas are the thoughts of God—not merely concepts in our minds, nor mere arbitrary concepts in a superior mind. They are, we might say, the differentiations in the one Idea of the Good. And, when we speak of God as making the world, we may therefore speak of him as making the things which to us are visible and tangible after the pattern of the ideas. The process of "becoming" (the evolution of the world as a world of manifold particulars from its one intelligent principle) is thus a continual manifestation of the One in the Many at different descending stages. As God to the higher and wider ideas, so are these to the lower species, and so are the lowest species to the indefinite variety of particular things. In the visible and tangible world the element of "the other" is a necessary condition of the phenomenal; but of everything, down to the lowest, the intelligible element, if there is any, is the "idea," while the irrational and unintelligible element is that of "the other"—of matter, the mere recipient of form, or mere space. This may not be precisely the way in which Plato would have put together the scattered indications of the *Sophistes*, *Philebus*, and *Timæus*; but some such way of conceiving the universe must have been his in his later philosophy, if he really set himself to amend and develop his original theory of ideas in the light of the criticisms of the *Parmenides*.

The ideas, as already said, are not discarded. They were not objected to. But they are no longer abstractly cut off from one another and from things. And the process from reality to appearance is made one of degrees, not rendered inexplicable by fixing an absolute gulf between them.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOUL

PLATO's account of the nature of the soul or mind—his psychology, if we call it so—is one of the most puzzling parts of his philosophy. Most of his discussions of the subject are embedded in the more figurative and “mythical” passages in his writings; and it is always difficult to know how far the imagery is to be taken seriously. Plato's words have exercised so profound an influence on the modes of thinking about soul and body which we have inherited, that we are apt to bring to the interpretation of them meanings which may not have been his. As we have already seen (cf. above, pp. 79, 80), the term “recollection” must not be understood too literally. The “priority” of soul to body of which he speaks in the *Timæus* (34 c) and the *Laws* (x. 892 A, 896 c) ⁽¹⁾ cannot be taken strictly as a priority in time; for time, process, change only have a meaning in the sensible world. If we put his notion more in terms of modern controversy, time has for Plato no absolute existence; the changing course of events belongs to the world of appearance, not to the world of ultimate reality. And yet, as Plato seems to have realised more fully in his later period, this world of appearance is not a mere illusion,

unless we wrongly take it to be the whole truth of things: it is the appearance of reality. The eternal is manifested in the temporal, which "imitates" it or shadows it forth. And so Plato's myths and parables about the nature of the soul and its relation to the body must be taken neither as literally true nor as wholly false, nor as mere accommodation to popular belief. They are, in the language of the *Republic* (ii. 382 D), "lies of approximation." In the *Lesser Hippias*—a dialogue which was known to Aristotle (cf. *Met.* Δ 29. § 9, 1025a, 6), and may very well be Plato's—it was argued, in a spirit of genuine Socratic paradox, that voluntary error is better than involuntary. The paradox, as Aristotle sees, comes from confusing the business of moral conduct with the work of the arts. In the arts the maxim is perfectly sound: the voluntary discord, the voluntary missing of the mark, is clearly better than the involuntary. But Plato adheres to the Socratic identification of virtue and knowledge, and therefore holds that the worst falsehood is not the verbal lie, but the lie in the soul, *i.e.* error or ignorance. It is a doctrine which is profoundly true, if we are taking a wide view of human life; but it is dangerous, if applied to justify deceit by those who rashly and dogmatically assume that they possess the whole truth. Of the verbal lie Plato permits two kinds: one is the "medicinal lie," as when, for instance, we deceive a madman or a sick person for his own good, and this justifies the myths by which the uneducated are made to submit to the ordinances of the wise ruler. In the British Constitution all sorts of things are supposed to be done by the king, which are really done in a more prosaic and republican fashion. In a Republic all sorts

of things are supposed to be done by "The People," which are really done by a few individuals. Plato would have called these useful constitutional survivals or conventions "noble lies." But the other permissible falsehood is the lie of approximation: where we cannot attain or cannot express the truth or the whole truth, we must use "the probable myth," taking the visible things with which we are familiar as the symbols and shadows of a truth too hard to grasp, or impossible to utter in a language that has grown up to meet everyday needs. As he says in the *Politicus* (277 D), "We must use examples or images in order to set forth sufficiently any of the greater things; for whilst we are dreaming we seem to know, but when we wake up we know nothing"—that is to say (apparently), our dreaming, our picture-thinking, gives us a kind of seeming knowledge, but it is not the real knowledge of clear conceptual thought.

Plato describes the soul of man as a threefold being—a man, a lion, and a many-headed hydra (*Rep.* ix. 588 B–E), or as a charioteer driving two horses, one of a noble and the other of an ignoble nature (*Phædrus*, 246). In the *Timæus* (69 E–71 A) he places the highest part, the reason, in the head, which imitates the spherical form of the universe and is placed highest in the human frame; the passionate or spirited element is placed in the region of the heart, and the desires or appetites below the diaphragm. All this is myth or symbol. Even the threefold partition of the mind is not to be taken quite literally⁽²⁾. In the tenth book of the *Republic* (611 C–612 A), as in the *Phædo* (78 C, 80 B), Plato speaks of the soul as in its true nature one and not manifold, although in the fourth book

(435 c-441 c) he had argued for the existence of separate faculties. In the *Theætetus* (184 D) he guards carefully against the notion that the different senses exist separately beside each other within us like the Greek warriors in the Trojan horse. In the *Philebus* (35 c) it is recognised that all the passions have their origin in the soul, although in the *Phædo* they had been ascribed to the body (66 c). To account for these discrepancies we cannot well resort to the explanation that Plato had made a complete change in his opinions; for the *Phædo* must belong to the same period as the *Phædrus*, and the tenth book of the *Republic*, though it may have been written at a considerable interval after the fourth book, and to some extent intended to correct earlier views, must nevertheless be earlier than the *Timæus*. We must distinguish between the passages in which Plato is speaking more, and those which he is speaking less, mythically. It is only to carry out the whole spirit of his attempt to grapple with "the one and the many," if we say that he regards the appearance of diversity and multiplicity in the soul as arising from the immersion of soul in matter. All particularisation or individualisation involves some materialising, and therefore some division or sundering of unity—"the same" mingling with "the other." The world-soul itself (*Tim.* 35 A seq.) is not mere unity, else it could not be the *world-soul*: it has in it the principle of "the other" as well as the principle of "the same." It accords with this general view that the desiring or appetitive soul should be the most manifold in its nature, a many-headed serpent (*Rep.* ix. 588 c): the rational soul has most of unity. Unity or self-consistency is the test of truth and good-

ness. The simplicity, which Plato asserts of the soul in the *Phædo* and the tenth book of the *Republic*, is not a predicate that belongs to the complex human person with his passions and cravings, but only to "the ruling part" (*Tim.* 41 c), to "the immortal principle of a mortal creature" (*Tim.* 42 E), that portion of the world-soul which for a time animates a bodily frame. We must speak of the passions and appetites as belonging to the soul, if we are thinking, as the psychologist does, of the actual phenomena of the human mind known to us in our experience. But we can speak of them as not belonging to the soul, if we are thinking more metaphysically of the soul in its true nature, *i.e.* in its relation to the world of ideas. If we separate soul and body, we must think of the soul as the element of unity and of the body as the element of multiplicity; although, in strict truth, as Plato came to see more clearly after the time when he wrote the *Phædo*, there is no unity at all in the world of time that is not mingled with an element of otherness.

What then are we to say of Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul and of those visions of the other world which have so greatly affected the imagination and the religious and philosophical beliefs of succeeding ages? It is noteworthy that, in the various dialogues in which Plato speaks of immortality, the arguments seem to be of different kinds, and most of them quite unconnected with one another. In the *Phædrus* (245 c) the argument is, that the soul is self-moving and therefore immortal; and this argument is repeated in the *Laws* (x. 894, 895). It is an argument that Plato probably inherited from Alcmaëon, the physician of Croton (*Arist. De An.* i. 2. § 17, 405a, 29), whose

views were closely connected with those of the Pythagoreans. In the *Phædo* the main argument up to which all the others lead is that the soul participates in the idea of life: "Recollection" alone would prove pre-existence, but not existence after death. In the tenth book of the *Republic* we find the curious argument that the soul does not perish like the body, because its characteristic evil, sin or wickedness, does not kill it as the diseases of the body wear out the bodily life. In the *Timæus* (41 A) the immortality even of the gods is made dependent on the will of the Supreme Creator; souls are not in their own nature indestructible, but persist because of his goodness. In the *Laws* (xii. 959 A) the notion of a future life seems to be treated as a salutary doctrine which is to be believed, because the legislator enacts it; and elsewhere, too, Plato gives his approval to traditional beliefs, provided that they have a good moral and social influence.

Now these various arguments are not quite so distinct from one another as at first sight they might seem to be. The argument of the *Republic*, that the soul is not destroyed by its peculiar evil, is only intelligible, if we take it as an ethical application of the argument in the *Phædo* which is directed against the theory that the soul is related to the body as the music ("harmony" in Greek means an ordered sequence of sounds) is related to the musical instrument. The virtuous soul, it is there urged (92 E-94 B), is not more a soul than the vicious, though it may be called more harmonious. The soul, that is to say, is not simply a condition or arrangement dependent upon the body, but prior to it and ruling it (*Phædo*, 94, 95). The body is a compound of material elements held together

only so long as it is in good condition: the soul has a unity and simplicity more complete than the best condition of any organism.

The argument of the *Phædrus* that the soul is the self-moving seems, as used by Plato, to be but another form of the main argument of the *Phædo*, that the soul participates in the idea of life. This comes out clearly in the *Laws* (x. 895 c), where life and the power of self-directed movement are identified. Soul, as we see from the *Timæus*, is not God (*i.e.* the idea of the Good), nor is it any one of the ideas; but it is, if we might so put it, nearer akin to the ideas, being more of a one and less of a many than any body or thing in the visible world.

Plato's main arguments, it has always been seen, do not prove the existence of a future life, except in connection with the doctrine of pre-existence, which is indeed the first to be established (in the *Meno*), and has even more arguments in its support. Some modern critics have urged that Plato's arguments do not prove the immortality of the soul at all, in the sense of continued personal existence; and some have even doubted whether they necessarily imply continued individual existence. The doctrine of "Recollection," as we have seen, means, when translated from poetry into philosophy, that if knowledge is to be possible the mind in its own nature must be "akin to" the ultimate nature of things. The "priority" of soul to body is the doctrine of all Idealism; in modern phrase, it is the denial that consciousness is a mere product of the material, or a mere "epiphenomenon," and a recognition that the self is in some sense an agent and the unity of the self the presupposition of all knowledge. Plato

shows that the soul or mind belongs to the eternal world, and not to the world of appearance merely; but that does not prove the necessity of a continued existence of every individual human or animal being. His arguments logically require only the eternity of reason, of an immortal part such as the Aristotelian "active intellect," or such as Spinoza recognises as present in every particular and temporary mind. And yet Plato's language is not compatible with a purely Aristotelian or Spinozistic interpretation. In the tenth book of the *Republic* (611 A) he speaks of the number of souls as something fixed and unchanging. This, of course, may merely be said to fit in with the picture of transmigration. In the *Laws* we hear much of "souls," and the doctrine of Ideas seems left in the background; but that is not because Plato has adopted monadism instead of idealism (as has been suggested), but because the *Laws* is throughout a compromise with ordinary opinion, political, social, and religious, and metaphysics would be out of place in such a dialogue. In the *Timæus*, where the mythical setting would excuse similar popular modes of expression, we find no assertion of an absolute plurality of individual souls. On the contrary, we find even the gods regarded as not immortal in themselves, but only because the Supreme Creator has so willed it (41 A). If we were to translate Plato's opinion into terms of modern natural theology, we might perhaps put it, that he does not hold that the soul is in itself indestructible, but that it may accord with the plan of Divine Goodness (the "Idea of the Good," that moral order which is the ultimate teleological explanation of the universe) that there should be a plurality of souls continuing in exist-

ence. Even Plato's visions of another world do not necessarily imply any survival of continuous personal consciousness: all the souls, before entering on a new period of earthly life, have to drink more or less of the waters of forgetfulness. Plato's myths admit of being interpreted, in their ethical aspect, as simply a recognition that the deeds which men do now, affect the lives and destinies of those that shall be born hereafter⁽³⁾.

Plato found certain beliefs about the world of the dead more or less vaguely accepted in the public and official religion of Hellenic cities, and certain more definite doctrines of transmigration and of future states of bliss and punishment taught in the Orphic and other mysteries, derived perhaps from Eastern religions, or at least influenced by them, and propagated in a purified form by the Pythagorean brotherhoods. In certain respects he found these beliefs mischievous, demoralising, and anti-social. Men, he thought, should not be taught to fear death as if it were in itself something terrible, and something from which even a brave man must shrink; nor should men believe that the effects of wrong-doing can be escaped by ceremonial purifications and mystic rites of initiation. And so in the *Republic* he sets out to discuss the difference between right and wrong, without looking beyond the well-being of human society. But after establishing his ethics, if we may so express it, on a purely sociological basis, he is ready to find a place for the belief in previous and future existence, when that belief can be kept from perverting our ethical judgments as to human conduct here on earth, and can be made a help instead of a hindrance to social well-being. It is in this same spirit that these beliefs are treated in the

Laws. The difference between right and wrong rests on no arbitrary fiat of supernatural powers: it can be tested by the way in which conduct works out in its social effects. But this difference between right and wrong is no mere matter of temporary human convention or of the convenience of rulers: it rests on the ultimate nature of the universe, and we may well express that by adapting our words to the prevalent opinion of mankind, and saying and teaching that "the gods and demi-gods are our allies in the great conflict between good and evil" (*Laws*, x. 906 A), and that they reward the good and punish the evil according to their deeds, without respect of persons; and, though this is contrary to prevalent opinion, it must be taught that they cannot be propitiated by sacrifices.

Plato does not speak dogmatically about a future life. To the end he might perhaps have accepted the words which he puts into the mouth of Socrates in the *Apology* (40 c), "Either death is a state of nothingness or utter unconsciousness, or according to what men say (*κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα*) the soul has a change and a migration from this world to another." Even in the *Phædo* Socrates is prepared to face either alternative. If his arguments prove a future life, he will gain greatly; but if there be nothing after death, he will not distress his friends with lamentations, and his ignorance will die with him (91 B). Death must be faced courageously, whether or not there be a future life for the individual. The subject is not one on which we can have certain knowledge; but it is not one on which dogmatic denials are permissible. There is "a great hope" (*Phædo*, 114 c) that the work of the noble soul is not ended by death. In any case Plato does not teach

the doctrine of Immortality in any such sense as to diminish the importance of political and social effort here; on the contrary, the myths and figures in which he speaks of it are all intended to inculcate the need of strenuous living. Plato's "other world" in its strict philosophical significance (though perhaps he does not always keep this in view) is the truth and full realisation of this world, not a world alongside of it to which the solitary saint or sage may flee away. The best life, he says distinctly, cannot be lived except in a suitable human society (*Rep.* vi. 497 A). The philosopher may be compelled to live out his life as a stranger and pilgrim on the earth and a citizen of a merely ideal or heavenly city; but that is not the most perfect life for man ⁽⁴⁾.

CHAPTER VIII

ETHICS AND POLITICS—THE “REPUBLIC”

THE dialogues which are of most significance for Plato's moral philosophy are the *Protagoras*, *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Philebus*; and if we assume, as we have good reasons on other grounds for doing, that the dialogues were composed in the order here given, we are able to obtain an intelligible picture of the development of Plato's thought on ethical subjects. In the *Protagoras* he maintains in an uncompromising form the Socratic doctrines that virtue is knowledge, that the virtues are one, and that no one is voluntarily evil (*Protag.* 345 D, E); and quite in the fashion of Xenophon's Socrates, though with more dialectical—and we might even say with more “eristic”—ingenuity, Plato's Socrates maintains that pleasure is the test of right conduct, pleasure and “good” being identical. Yet towards the end of the *Protagoras* (356 D) he introduces the conception of an “art of measuring,” which is necessary to guide us; so that, after all, the ultimate appeal is to knowledge and not to the mere feeling of pleasure.

In the *Meno* and *Gorgias* the simpler Socratic ethics are supplemented and modified by the presence of a Pythagorean element (cf. above, p. 50). In the *Meno*

the unity of the virtues is maintained, but on deeper grounds than in the *Protagoras*; for the common notion which entitles things to be called by a common name is now seen to imply an ultimate unity of nature (the "idea": the word εἶδος is on the way to become technical, 72 c). Moreover, a difficulty which had already arisen in the discussion between Socrates and Protagoras (*Protag.* 361) is made more prominent in the *Meno*: if virtue is knowledge, it must be capable of being taught; but it appears not to be capable of being taught, for where are the teachers? Neither the Sophists, who profess to teach it, nor the statesmen are able to give genuine instruction in the art of right living (*Meno*, 89–96). Probably in order to meet the argument of Protagoras, that men learn right conduct as they learn their native language from the people round them (*Protag.* 327 E, 328 A)⁽¹⁾, Plato's Socrates in the *Meno* (96 E–98 A) makes the important distinction between "right opinion" and true "knowledge." Right opinion may be a sufficient practical guide for most men, and it is all they appear to have; but what security is there for its rightness? "If not by knowledge, statesmen must have guided states by right opinion (εὐδοξία), which is in politics what divination is in religion; for diviners and prophets say many things truly, but they know not what they say. . . . And may we not truly call those men 'divine' who, having no understanding, yet succeed in many great deeds and words. . . . Statesmen above all may be said to be divine and inspired by God. . . . Thus goodness or excellence, where it does appear, would seem to come, neither by nature nor by teaching, but by the grace of God without understanding (θεία

μοίρα παραγινόμενη ἄνευ νοῦ), unless there be found among statesmen some one who is capable of educating statesmen. And if there be such a one, he may be said to be among the living what Homer says that Tiresias was among the dead: 'He alone has understanding; but the rest flit as shades,' for he in respect of his excellence will be like a reality among shadows" (*Meno*, 99 B-100 A). Plato was evidently becoming more fully aware of the difficulties of the problem. We can see that the reference to divine inspiration is partly ironical, as in the suggestion of the *Ion* that the literary critic⁽²⁾ works by inspiration because he certainly does not possess science. We can see also that Plato's mind was already occupied with the questions with which he deals explicitly in the *Republic*.

In the *Gorgias* virtue is conceived as the principle of "harmony" or order, and justice in particular is defined as proportional equality. The ideal of unity or concord is applied both logically and ethically (482 C, 507 E, 508 A). Pleasure is no longer, as in the *Protagoras*, taken as a test of goodness. In fact in the *Gorgias* and *Phædo* Plato seems to incline in his ethics to the Cynic end of the Socratic scale and to accentuate the ascetic Pythagorean element in his teaching, laying stress on the antithesis between soul and body and speaking of the body as the prison-house or tomb of the soul (*Phædo*, 62 B; *Gorg.* 493 A; cf. *Cratyl.* 400 B). Yet we must not suppose Plato to be expressing his whole mind in either of these dialogues. We must remember that the *Phædrus* and the *Symposium* belong to the same general period, and must be taken as balancing and supplying the necessary complement to the ethical severity of the *Gorgias*

and *Phædo*, showing how through and from the love of sensuous beauty the soul may be raised to the vision of ideal beauty. These four dialogues indeed seem to fall into complementary pairs. In the *Gorgias* rhetoric is altogether condemned: in the *Phædrus* it is treated as capable of noble uses. The *Phædrus* is probably the later work, and represents Plato's maturer thought. The *Symposium* and the *Phædo* would seem to belong to nearly the same date. Socrates at the banquet and Socrates awaiting death in the prison naturally touch on different aspects of life and of philosophy; but there is no real inconsistency. A characteristic difference between Xenophon and Plato, and a proof, I think, that Xenophon really wrote the somewhat crude *Symposium* that goes by his name, may be found in the fact that Xenophon's Socrates is anxious to turn perverted Greek sentiment into the healthier channel of connubial affection⁽³⁾, whilst Plato's Socrates makes his erotic discourse an exhortation to the pursuit of philosophic truth. The real Socrates was probably quite capable of both methods of improving the occasion; but Plato's *Symposium* (which may indeed have been provoked by the less artistic production of Xenophon) undoubtedly introduces a metaphysical idealism which goes beyond the range of his master's teaching.

In the *Republic*, except perhaps in the puritanical treatment of art, Plato takes a wider view of all the aspects of human life than in any other of his works. He recognises, in marked advance upon the position of the *Gorgias*, that there are good pleasures as well as bad, and that the highest and best life conceivable is not that of the good man in the evil state bravely

enduring suffering, but that of the good man in a favourable society—a social, not an individualist, ideal. The human body is regarded as deserving careful training for the sake of the soul. The philosopher is not to be permitted to escape from the duties of citizenship, if only the city will accept his rule. The vision of another life and the hopes and fears of divine justice are not allowed (as they seemed to do in the *Gorgias*) to influence the proof that justice is better and stronger than injustice. This in the *Republic* rests solely on the argument that justice is the principle of social cohesion; and the hope of immortality is only permitted to come in as the supplement of an ethical theory which is established independently of it. The Socratic ethics are not deserted in the *Republic*, but they are developed. “Virtue is knowledge.” This is still the central doctrine; and the ideal commonwealth in which wisdom is to rule is just a translation of it into “large letters.” But Plato now recognises fully that the preparation for philosophic virtue must be through the training of habit and ordinary unphilosophical opinion. The argument of the Sophist Protagoras, that people learn right conduct as they learn their native tongue from all the society round them, is now fully accepted by Plato as one element in his social ethics. But if society thus trains the young, how all-important it is that society should be rightly constituted and wisely governed. The education that begins with habit and imitation must go on to the higher stages of science and philosophy, if we are to have rulers with the necessary wisdom. The virtue of opinion is the only virtue that the mass of mankind can attain to (δημοσικὴ ἀρετή) (4). But the business of the philosopher in the

good state is to guide the opinion of the multitude. The question, which had been raised in the *Protagoras* and more fully in the *Meno*, whether and how virtue can be taught, thus receives its solution in the *Republic*. We must distinguish the teaching which is carried on by obedience to custom and by training in habits from the teaching which takes the form of intellectual instruction. The former is essential for all, and the latter can only be built on the foundation of the former. And yet the steady rightness of mere opinion and popular belief is dependent on the guidance and direction of the truly wise. Nay more, we must have well-disposed natures to start with. The wisest legislator can only work with good effect upon sufficiently good material; and the importance of hereditary tendencies is recognised. Plato in the *Republic* thus distinguishes the three elements which go to the formation of virtuous character in the same way as Aristotle does in his *Ethics* (x. 9)—nature, habit, and intellectual enlightenment (*φύσις, ἔθος, διδασχῇ*)⁽⁵⁾,—though Plato, in his ideal state, lays more stress upon the last than Aristotle considers necessary or advantageous.

The doctrine of the unity of the virtues is not discarded in the *Republic*; but it is supplemented by the recognition of diversity within the unity. Courage or Fortitude is the special virtue of the spirited or passionate element in the mind and of the military class in the state. Wisdom is the special virtue of the ruling element in the mind and of the governing class in the state. Temperance ("sober-mindedness" and "moderation" are perhaps better equivalents for *σωφροσύνη*) is the due subordination of the lower mental and social elements to the higher. Justice—or we should rather

say Righteousness—is the unity of the virtues, for it consists, according to the definition at which Plato arrives (*Rep.* iv. 433 A), in each part in the individual and in society doing its proper work and not interfering with the work of the others. Thus, the four “cardinal virtues,” which seem to have been a generally accepted list before the time of Plato, and which have remained an accepted list ever since, are all recognised as in some sense distinguishable, instead of being simply merged in knowledge or wisdom, as in the earlier “Socratic” dialogues. Holiness or piety, which Protagoras the Sophist had named as a fifth virtue, is not expressly discussed in the *Republic*, nor is any special place assigned to it in the soul or in the state. The reason may be sufficiently supplied from the *Euthyphro*, where Socrates exposes the evil consequences that result from separating piety from justice or righteousness. To Plato the notion of duties to the gods which had nothing to do with duties to mankind was specially abhorrent. His ideal state has no separate and independent priestly caste: he is a Greek of the age of free Greek republics, and makes religion altogether an affair of the state.

The doctrine of the unity amid diversity of the virtues is expressly, and one might think unnecessarily, reasserted in the *Laws* (xii. 963–965). No elaborate scientific education is required of the guardians of this second-best state; but they must be trained to see the one in the many in this matter at least, and to recognise that the virtues, though four, are also one. It has been argued that Plato is here expressly replying to Aristotle’s *Ethics* (v)—a theory which involves the very improbable assumption that Aristotle had in Plato’s

lifetime published the *Ethics*—a book which bears all the marks of being edited, and badly edited, out of miscellaneous materials after Aristotle's death. It is possible and likely enough that Aristotle may in discussion with Plato have asserted his dislike for the general and vague⁽⁷⁾ and insisted on the need of details and distinctions with an emphasis which led Plato to reassert his old doctrine of unity in almost the last words of his last writing.

To return to the *Republic*—Pleasures are distinguished in kind and degree of excellence, according to the parts of the soul which they accompany; and the pleasures of the highest part must be preferred to the pleasures of the lower parts, because the highest part, the reason, is the only part capable of judging, and reason assigns the highest place to its own peculiar pleasures (ix. 582 A). Plato, like John Stuart Mill, gives the preference to the pleasures preferred by the being of higher faculties; but he approaches the subject of pleasure with his distinction of "higher" and "lower" already formed, and does not profess to find in the mere feeling of pleasure as such a sufficient criterion for the discovery of that distinction. In the *Philebus* the analysis of pleasure is carried out with much more elaboration. But the main doctrine is the same as in the *Republic*. Pleasure, it is maintained, cannot be the chief good (as the Cyrenaics held), for it partakes of the nature of the "indefinite"; but neither is knowledge alone the chief good. The best life must contain both knowledge and the highest kinds of pleasure. Aristotle has some criticisms to make on the Platonic psychology of pleasure, and therefore on the special mode in which Platonists refuted Cyrenaics or other Hedonists; but on

the whole his view of the ethical position of pleasure is the same as that of Plato in the *Philebus*. Both Plato and Aristotle disagree with the more extreme and ascetic theory of Plato's successor, Speusippus, who denied that any pleasure was good, though he shrank apparently from the Cynic paradox that pleasure was *per se* evil (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* vii. 13. § 1, 1153b, 6) (8). On the whole, we may say that Plato's more important ethical dialogues, beginning with the *Protagoras* and ending with the *Philebus*, make a steady advance from the ethics of Socrates towards a position which differs comparatively little from that of Aristotle, save that Aristotle's "codification" of Plato and keenly asserted objections to various details give an appearance of difference, which disappears if we contrast Plato and Aristotle together with the Cynics or Cyrenaics, Stoics or Epicureans.

The *Republic*, owing mainly to its greater length, does not perhaps produce the same feeling of artistic perfection as the *Gorgias* or the *Phædrus* or the *Symposium*: it is not so easily "taken in as a whole." But it is undoubtedly the greatest of Plato's writings. It was probably written between the ages of forty and sixty, when his intellectual powers were fully developed, and before his care for artistic composition had begun to decline; and it contains within it, as no other single dialogue does, all the various elements of his philosophy. If we are to use our modern post-Aristotelian rubrics, it contains his logic, his metaphysics, his psychology, his ethics, his politics, and even, in the elaborate "myth" at the end, some part of his astronomical views. On a first reading, many persons who take it up with great

expectations may feel some disappointment. It may seem arbitrary, slight, in parts tedious, in parts unnecessarily paradoxical, and the connection between the different portions may appear hard to trace. It is very possible, indeed, that it may have been written at intervals, and though it was probably planned as a whole, yet the joining of some of the divisions is left a little rough. But, like many of the greatest works of art, the *Republic* cannot make its best impression all at once: on each successive reading its depth and variety are more disclosed, and even the elaborate but concealed skill with which its different parts fit together. Plato's ideal state has served as the model for numerous imitations; but its lessons for the world are very far from being exhausted. Only a few points can be touched on here.

The professed subject of the dialogue is the nature of justice—an ethical problem. But the answer to the question is found in the construction of an ideal commonwealth; and, since such a commonwealth involves the rule of trained philosophers, education in the fullest sense is treated of. The dialogue, we may say, is ethical; but the ethics are merged in politics and in metaphysics. The subjects of justice, of political institutions, and of education are, in Plato's view, necessarily connected, and all of them lead up into the ultimate questions of knowing and being. In regarding ethics as essentially social or political ethics, Plato is only following in the steps of Socrates as he is represented to us by Xenophon; and here we may feel tolerably confident that we are dealing with the historical Socrates. Among the questions which Socrates was always asking, Xenophon names "What is a state?"

What is a statesman? What is government? What is a character capable of ruling?" (Xen. *Mem.* i. 1. § 16). Socrates defined justice as acting according to law and custom (*ibid.* iv. 4), and it was part of his conception of the good man that he must be a good citizen. The sentimental cosmopolitanism or anarchism of Cyrenaic and Cynic were deviations from the central Socratic teaching—exaggerations of the independent spirit in which Socrates judged his own people with their prejudices and limitations. Xenophon has almost certainly made Socrates more *bourgeois* than he was: he has toned down or overlooked his paradoxes, has not seen the full consequences of defining virtue as knowledge (cf. above, p. 56). When Socrates said that political office should belong not to those who were elected or chosen by lot, but to those who knew how to rule, Xenophon was probably unaware of how much was involved, and may have thought he merely heard a Conservative politician objecting to the extreme democracy of Athens. Plato, as has been already urged, is the true inheritor of the whole philosophic treasure of Socrates; but it grows greatly under his handling. Plato is more fully aware than Socrates of the difference between ethics and politics. He sees that the good man is not necessarily the good citizen of any and every state. He is the citizen of a state which may be a pattern laid up in heaven. Nevertheless, we cannot define righteousness or justice without thinking out a whole definite society. "Giving to every one his due" (*Rep.* i. 331, 332) is a definition of justice which might satisfy the ordinary man who is content to take his notions from traditional beliefs, as it was afterwards to satisfy the Roman jurists. But it is one

of those popular explanations which only staves off the question it professes to solve. *Suum cuique*. But what is *his own*, and who are to count when we speak of *each*? To answer these questions we must think out a state. Sophistic theories, like that which defines the just as what the government commands (*justum est quod iussum est*, *Rep.* i. 340 A) or that which explains it as arising out of a social contract (ii. 359 A), do indeed represent more serious attempts to grapple with the difficulty. But, if we define the just as what is commanded, we are without any criterion to distinguish just from unjust, or, let us say, wise from foolish government. To make justice dependent on a contract is a circular definition; for whence comes the obligation to fulfil contracts? Practically, the social contract theory, in all ages, has been an artificial and somewhat inverted way of stating the necessarily social nature of mankind, their mutual dependence upon one another. But what distinguishes Plato's views from these Sophistic theories, as it distinguishes the views of the Xenophontic Socrates from those of the Sophist Hippias (*Xen. Mem.* iv. 4), is that Plato is not content with a vague abstract formula. He sees that the details must be filled in, and that, whatever we maintain to be just or right, must be shown to produce harmony and strength and stability in some actual, or at least in some conceivable, society. This is the "Utilitarianism" of Plato, by which he corrects alike (1) the merely traditional acceptance of political and religious usages and beliefs, and (2) the abstract doctrines of the new rationalism which appealed away from convention to a "nature" that might justify either the sentimental anarchism of individualist philo-

sophers or the unblushing egotism of the man of the world, which respected nothing but successful fraud or force. To know what is just we must look at "the large letters": we must think out a society or community of human beings. This is the Socratic test of utility, but corrected and systematised by the Pythagorean idea of harmony. And we find that the essence of justice consists, not in each receiving what is his due, but in each individual, and in each part of the individual nature, working for the efficiency and well-being of the whole (*Rep.* iv. 433 A). It is an ideal of duties rather than of rights: it is in the strictest sense of the term a "socialist" and not an individualist ideal.

The Platonic republic has often been spoken of as if it was the typical representative of fantastic and unpractical dreaming—the outcome perhaps of "the genial cups of an Academic night-sitting." It was a useful corrective of such a notion when Hegel⁽⁹⁾ said that Plato was only giving the essence of Greek political life: "No one can escape from his own age; the spirit of the age is his own spirit likewise." And this is true of all Utopias, unless in so far as they have been mere literary followings of Plato's. The framer of ideals translates into a form that can be grasped by the imagination tendencies that are implicit in the society round him. The creative imagination, as we call it, cannot create out of nothing; it can only use the materials which the actual world of experience supplies; and the models for the most fanciful rearranging of these materials must come also from the hints and suggestions of that which already exists. It is of a city-state of the usual Greek size that Plato is thinking. Slavery and the constant possibility of war

with neighbouring cities are taken for granted. Plato's ideal republic, we might say, is a Lacedæmon, inspired and guided by the philosophic wisdom which condemned Athenian democracy, but which Spartan barracks would never have tolerated and could never have produced; and the evils which Plato's ideal state was intended to correct were just those with which he found the states round him inadequately trying to deal—individual self-seeking and ambition, the political struggles between rich and poor, the corrupting influences of wealth and of the envy of wealth, want of discipline, want of training for a statesman's duties, and—even in drilled Sparta—half the population, the women, left undisciplined, a source of weakness and corruption.

But Plato, it must be added, was not thinking only of military Sparta, wealthy and oligarchical Corinth, democratic Athens, and despotically governed Syracuse—the actual states which are most prominently suggested to our minds by his description of the descending series of imperfect constitutions in the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic*. The Pythagorean religious brotherhoods within the Greek world, and the Egyptian caste system without it ⁽¹⁰⁾, must be reckoned among his models. And it is the combination of various elements never before put together, and the bold working out of the principles suggested by actual institutions, which give to Plato's ideal state its strange and paradoxical aspect, which make it a new compound, something in many respects un-Hellenic, an anticipation of future endeavour, and not a mere summing up of the past. It has been said of Dante's idealisation of the Holy Roman Empire in

his *De Monarchia*, that it was "an epitaph instead of a prophecy"⁽¹¹⁾; we might invert the phrase and apply it to Plato's *Republic*.

Plato's "communism," his proposed abolition of private property and the private family, is indeed greatly misunderstood, if classed with such modern communistic schemes as aim mainly at making the material goods of life accessible to the majority, and getting rid of the restrictions which kings and priests, capitalists and "bosses," have imposed on the free enjoyment of the proletariat. Such proposals Plato would probably have classed with that extreme democracy which prepares the way for tyranny—the worst government of all. Plato's communism is a system of restraint and prohibition on moral grounds, and he either does not apply it to the class of manual labourers or does not seem concerned whether it is applied to them or not (cf. the criticism in *Arist. Pol.* ii. 5. § 18, 1264a, 14). If we are to look for later parallels to Plato's state, we shall find them in the rules of monastic orders, or in the ideals of the clergy of the Latin Church as reorganised by Hildebrand. Property cares and family ties are put aside as interruptions and temptations, hindering the higher life of the individual or interfering with devoted service to the community. Substitute "Church" for "State," and the supremacy of the ministers of religion for the rule of philosophers, and we can see how Plato's republic is a prophecy of the ideal which has always hovered before the mind of ecclesiastics, Catholic and Puritan—the "reign of the saints," that "spiritual independence" which means the supremacy of the clergy, since it claims for the ecclesiastic the final right to decide what are spiritual

things and what temporal. If we look for a definite attempt to realise the Platonic commonwealth in a detailed system, we shall find it best in the hundred and sixty years' rule of Jesuit missionaries in Paraguay. Here we have a higher caste ruling an inferior, the rulers recruited indeed from Europe, but free, like Plato's "guardians," from all ties of family or private property, picked men carefully trained by a severe discipline, combining intellectual superiority with sovereign power. The Jesuit fathers, moreover, managed all the property of the country on communistic principles, and regulated the marriages of their flock with considerable precision. Probably the Indians of Paraguay were never happier than under the paternal despotism of this new powerful Pythagorean brotherhood. But when the Jesuit mission was withdrawn, with the suppression of the order in 1768, the effects of their rule quickly vanished. They had planted nothing that could live and grow when left to itself. As in the Platonic state, any relaxation of the authority of the ruling caste could only be followed by decay : and even Plato's guardians were not a separate caste in the same sense as the European missionaries among American natives⁽¹²⁾.

But as Plato's perfect commonwealth results from the combination of diverse and seemingly opposite tendencies in the society round him, so may it be regarded as the foreshadowing of more than one of the ideals of later times, and even of some that appear inconsistent with one another. Its significance for the future is certainly not exhausted by the parallel of the Church or of energetic religious orders. Plato himself, as we shall see, was willing in his declining years to

translate his philosophic state into a humbler version, and to substitute a severely reformed popular theology for strictly philosophical truth. When he wrote the *Republic* he was less ready for any compromise with the ordinary world; and even to the last he holds up the rule of science and philosophy as the ideal, though it may be unattainable. We do undoubtedly help ourselves to understand Plato's "philosophers" by comparing them with the better representatives of a dominant Church. But we must also remember that Plato's philosopher is not merely a man of disciplined moral character and strenuous obedience to principles: he is also supposed to stand on the highest level of scientific attainment, and it is his business to apply that in his guidance of the state. The ecclesiastical statesmen of the Middle Ages or of Puritanism were expected to apply to corrupt human society a fixed and authoritative code, handed down to them from the inspired wisdom of the past. The Platonic statesman is not to be tied by fixed rules; he has to make his own code from time to time (cf. *Rep.* iv. 425 and *Polit.* 294); and the main Platonic principle is that "what is most useful is sacred" (*Rep.* v. 458 E). If we think of Plato's bold proposals with regard to the breeding and rearing of citizens, we see that his modern disciples in this matter must be sought, not among ecclesiastics who do not look beyond traditional "prohibited degrees," but among those scientific students of biological heredity who try to make an inattentive world realise that a healthy and capable race of human beings is as much worth cultivation as a good stock of horses or cattle. With regard to the status of women, Plato is often misrepresented. The "equality of the sexes" is not his watchword. He

thinks that, even in what are usually considered women's occupations, such as weaving and cooking, men can do better on the average (*Rep.* v. 455 c, d). But, although men on the average may be superior, he does not see why the public discipline of half the population should be neglected, or why the state should lose the services of those women who are capable of doing work for the public. Plato has suggested some very hard and still unsolved problems in a light and airy way. There are strange people who think that an argument need not be taken seriously, unless it is put forward in a dull fashion and a fat volume.

The defects and difficulties in Plato's ideal scheme have been pointed out by Aristotle with a minuteness to which modern criticism can add little (*Pol.* i. 2-5); and Aristotle's objections are the more significant, because they come from a writer living in the same Greek world and breathing the same free intellectual atmosphere. Aristotle objects to the end which Plato has in view—the ideal of a unity of the state so complete that it would leave no difference between state and family, and would even seek to make the citizens feel themselves members one of another, like the parts of a single human body. Plato, we see, has carried out the idea which Xenophon's Socrates holds, that there is no difference, save in degree, between the government of a household and the government of a state⁽¹³⁾. Plato is putting forward an ideal of unity which Aristotle regards as impracticable even for the small compact Hellenic city—an ideal of unity, however, which has remained the ideal, however little realised, of a Church that claims to be universal, the "city of God." Aristotle holds, moreover, that even if Plato's

ideal were a right one or a possible, the means he proposes will not attain it. The hard-and-fast line drawn between the ruling class of guardians and warriors and the subject class of workers will make the state not one but two; it will be like a garrison supported by a conquered population (*Pol.* ii. 5. § 20, 1264a, 24). Here the modern critic will generally agree with Aristotle, or, at least, will wish with him that Plato had said more about the transference of citizens from one class to another according to their fitness; for Plato's aristocracy rests, it must be remembered, not on the custom of inherited privilege, nor on an unalterable caste system, but on the scientific doctrine of heredity, which teaches that men are not born equal, but which teaches also that variations are found among the offspring of the same parents, so that advance and degeneration are both possible. The raising, and still more, perhaps, the proper lowering, of individuals according to proved worth is a difficulty in all societies; and Plato has not altogether forgotten it, though he has touched on it but slightly.

Aristotle's arguments against Plato are partly dialectical—the extreme adverse case put forcibly in order that the truth may be tested. But there is a real and great difference in their attitudes to political questions, which comes from Aristotle being completely disillusioned about the barrack virtues of Lacedæmon, and from his greater sympathy with Athenian democracy, provided it could be brought back to primitive moderation, as in Solon's days, and from his readiness to appreciate more favourably the good elements and the moral discipline of ordinary family life and the care of private property. Improve people's characters, says

Aristotle, and you will do more to promote human well-being than by attempting revolutionary changes in institutions. The argument has to us a very familiar ring. Plato would have answered by urging that character, as Aristotle himself holds, depends partly on nature, partly on nurture; and that institutions supply the nurture and may even help to determine the nature. We feel that Aristotle's criticisms, even when they are quite fair to Plato's words, hardly recognise sufficiently what Plato was attempting in his *Republic*. Plato himself has practically admitted the force of most of them by writing the *Laws*, and constructing a model that might conceivably be imitated by some actual Greek colony or by any other such city making a fresh start. The *Republic*, however, has a wider range of influence; for its unrealised ideal has appealed not to the Greeks only nor to Plato's own age: its lessons are not yet exhausted, nor have they all been appropriated by the Church.

As already said, the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge is the starting-point of all Plato's ethics and politics. Plato, as we have seen, comes to recognise the truth, which Aristotle urged more explicitly, that character and conduct depend upon natural disposition, and upon practice and habits; but he refuses to give up the Socratic doctrine (which even Aristotle is willing to retain, though in a more modified form; cf. *Eth. Nic.* vi. 13).

Above the right conduct of the man who is guided by opinion there is still the ideal of a right conduct guided by perfect knowledge of the truth; and a society can only be the best if it is the embodiment of the highest wisdom. To appreciate the Socratic doctrine we must

think not merely of the neglected ethical truth which Benthamism helped to recall to the minds of men, that we cannot trust to mere instincts or intuitions, but must carefully calculate consequences, in order to find out what is right and what is wrong. We must think also of the religious acceptance of the phrase "knowing the truth." Indeed the controversy between Plato and Aristotle on this matter is but one aspect of the controversy about Faith and Works, which has appeared in so many forms. Real living knowledge, real faith, will show itself in works: the works without knowledge, without faith, are dead; they represent a mere external obedience, and there is no security for their continued rightness. This is the Socratic doctrine by which Plato holds, though without the exaggeration of the Stoics afterwards—those Calvinists of Greek ethics, who divided all mankind into wise and fools, elect and reprobate. The difference between Plato and Aristotle is one of degree, Aristotle holding a less "high" doctrine and thinking more of the average human being, like a moderate theologian who dreads the possible antinomianism of the Perfectionist.

But the analogy of theological controversies would give a misleading version of Plato's meaning, if we did not supplement it by calling attention once more to the stress he lays on scientific knowledge. There might seem a certain resemblance between the Platonic ideal and that of Comte—a priesthood of men of science guiding the statesmen; but we may feel sure that the Comtist acceptance and accentuation of a dualism between the spiritual and temporal powers would have found little sympathy from Plato. His ideal is unity. His rulers are themselves to be philo-

sophers; his philosophers rulers. If we translate his notion into less personal language, what he clearly means is that the good state must be regulated by the highest available knowledge. Hegel has put the matter very forcibly by his illustration of Frederick the Great of Prussia, whom he considers a philosopher-king in Plato's sense, not because he interested himself in Wolffian metaphysics and Voltairean "philosophy"—that was a private matter—but because he governed with a view to the welfare of his people, adopting this as a definite principle even against the obligations of treaties with other states and respect for the traditional right of corporations within the state⁽¹⁴⁾. Hegel puts the matter in an extreme and paradoxical way, but he brings out a too easily neglected aspect of Plato's thought—its real significance for practical politics.

The good state must, on the one hand, not be hampered by mere tradition; on the other hand, it cannot be realised through the application of abstract theories of equality, the natural rights of individuals, and so on. The welfare of the whole, and not of this or that part or individual, must be the guiding principle. Discipline and obedience are essential. Science is essential. Education, in those fitted to profit by it, should be lifelong. The citizen must be content to do whatever he can do best. He who is specially fitted to be a farmer or a cobbler should not be a statesman, either by hereditary right or by popular election. Men or women who are by natural capacity and education qualified for administrative work should not have their special talents wasted in employment of a mechanical kind, or in the mere struggle to live. The difficulty is to find "guardians" capable of managing

all this; and such a kind of government is of course unattainable, unless the state be looked upon, not as a mere arena for the struggles of rival parties and competing class interests, but as the realisation of the best life: that is to say, the Platonic state must be to its citizens what a church or a religious order has been to its most devoted members. Such an ideal is still "a pattern laid up in heaven," but it has not lost its value as a standard by which the political and religious schemes of to-day may be measured and judged.

Even Plato's seemingly unsympathetic treatment of the fine arts should not be put aside as the mere prejudices of a sour Puritan or of a scientific pedant, to whom "poetry is misrepresentation" (15). What Plato was anxious about was the social influence of the artist's work. He certainly felt that the ballads of a people were at least as important as their laws (cf. *Rep.* iv. 424; *Laws*, iii. 701 A, B). Art should not be the minister to private luxury, nor the fosterer of individual passion or sentimentalism. A city would indeed be "a city of pigs" without art. But a state cannot be strong and healthy, unless its songs and its plays and its pictures help its young men and maidens to grow up into better citizens than they would be without them.

CHAPTER IX

THE "LAWS"

THE *Laws* must be the latest of Plato's writings. We have Aristotle's testimony that it was written after the *Republic*. We have also the tradition that it was left unfinished, and edited by Philippus of Opus, who wrote the *Epinomis* as a sequel to it, completing the plan (cf. above, p. 28). There is an allusion near the beginning (i. 638 A, B) to the conquest of the Epizephyrian Locrians by the Syracusans, an event of 356 B.C.; and unless we are to suppose this particular passage to have been inserted later (in the refutation of the Spartan view that military success was the sole test of political excellence), we must conclude that the work was written during the last seven or eight years of Plato's life, when he was already over seventy years old. The character of the work agrees with the view that it belongs to Plato's extreme age. He has himself made the dialogue a conversation between three old men, an Athenian, a Cretan, and a Lacedæmonian, and he expressly refers to the keen vision of old age helping a man to correct his earlier opinions (iv. 715 D). The *Laws* contains many dignified and impressive passages, in which Plato has put on the mantle of the preacher, and speaks with great rhetorical beauty, but

without the lightness and vivacity of his earlier style. He is more ready than in his younger days to come down to the level of ordinary human intelligence; but it is partly because he does not expect too much of mankind, for what is man when compared with the gods? (vii. 803 B, C; 804 B). The workmanship is unequal. There are repetitions which show the dialogue to be unfinished, and there is some uncertainty in his plan or method, betraying diminished artistic power and diminished care for artistic excellence.

It is often said that in the *Laws* Plato's views have changed, and that he has recanted his earlier philosophical idealism. Mr. Grote speaks of Plato interdicting philosophy as well as poetry in the *Laws*, and exalting "an orthodox religious creed into exclusive ascendancy" ⁽¹⁾. The expression, at least in its most obvious modern meaning, is misleading. Plato has not deserted the ideals of his *Republic*, though he seems less hopeful about their possible realisation: he is ready to make concessions to the world round him, and to frame a second-best state that might actually be adopted under favourable conditions, such as the foundation of a new colony, in some part of the Greek world. Communism he still regards as the ideal organisation of society; but he is prepared to allow private property and separate families (v. 739-740; vii. 807 B), if equal lots of land can be maintained, if limitation be put on the acquisition of personal property, if population be regulated and some attempt made to bring women under a training and discipline like that of the men (vii. 793 D; 804 D-806 D; vi. 785 B, etc.). The theory of ideas does not appear in the *Laws*. The wisdom which is to guide the state is

not now conceived as scientific knowledge, but as practical wisdom and self-control (*φρόνησις* and *σωφροσύνη*; cf. Arist. *Eth. Nic.* vi.; *Pol.* iii. 4. § 17, 1277b, 25). The term "idea" is used only in a way which might have occurred in one of the earlier Socratic dialogues (xii. 965 c). The whole argument moves expressly on the level of opinion, and not of philosophic science. The Athenian stranger could not well have discussed metaphysical questions with the illiterate Cretan and still more illiterate Spartan. Plato's philosophical ideals are not abandoned; but he is willing to translate philosophy into the language of religion. But what is this religion? Not certainly the ordinary Greek "orthodoxy" which he had combated in the *Euthyphro* and the *Republic*. The *Laws* is not in any way a recantation of earlier anti-religious sentiments, such as the *Bacchae* of Euripides has been supposed to be. There are three doctrines not to be tolerated in the state: (1) That there are no gods—the doctrine of materialistic philosophers; (2) that there are gods, but that they do not concern themselves about the affairs of men (*i.e.* the denial of any moral order in the universe); (3) that there are gods, and that they direct all things, but that they can be appeased and propitiated by prayers and sacrifices. This last is the most widely diffused belief, and by far the most mischievous. Plato holds, like Bacon (in his essay *On Superstition*), that superstition is a greater danger to states than atheism. Atheism, it is admitted, may be compatible with righteous living; but it is dangerous because apt to lead to moral disorder. But superstition is always mischievous (x. 885 *seq.*; cf. xii. 948 c). The dogmas which Plato wishes to enforce are

only those which he regards as absolutely certain and absolutely necessary to the stability of any society. The existence of God he holds to be proved by the priority of soul, the self moving, to that which is moved but cannot explain its own movement; and also by the order of the heavenly bodies, which evidence the governance of mind and not of chance. The "orthodoxy" of Plato has much more in common with the "Civil Religion" of Rousseau⁽²⁾ than with the "orthodoxy" of either Eastern or Western Christendom. Plato's intolerance is the intolerance of the philosophical social reformer, who would like to stamp out superstitious and demoralising practices with a good deal of harshness. We must remember, too, that in drawing up the laws of an ideal state, best or second-best, Plato is not legislating for a nation as we understand it, a complex and varied society, or rather a combination of many societies, containing very diverse elements. A city-state which is well regulated, as he conceives it, is rather like a school or a college or a religious order, the members of which may differ from the undisciplined world round them, but must in the intimate life they are to lead together, with common meals and continual close association, be governed by uniform principles of life and conduct, if their society is to be strong and harmonious. One might have expected a more sympathetic appreciation of the precise nature of Plato's intolerance from Mr. Grote, who opposed the appointment of Dr. Martineau to a chair of philosophy in the college he was keenly interested in, on the ground that Dr. Martineau was a clergyman, a theologian, and an opponent of that empiricism which was "orthodoxy" to Mr. Grote⁽³⁾. But these catch-

words of "orthodoxy" and "dissent" have led the erudite English Radical to take a partisan view of this, as of many other questions in Greek life, politics, and philosophy.

The *Laws*, when compared with the *Republic*, does indeed show some change of mental attitude. The willingness to see a certain element of rationality in the society round him, the diminished antagonism to Athenian democracy, the appreciation of Athenian legal institutions,—all show the growth of a tendency which was already strongly marked in the *Politicus*, where it is admitted that democracy is less bad than oligarchy, and even that there is a good kind of democracy (*Polit.* 303 A, B).

In the *Politicus* Plato argues that the rule of the wise man is better than the rule of the written law, which is an inflexible tyrant; though he admits, as he had not done in the *Republic*, that if we cannot get our ideal ruler, the next best thing is to compel adherence to written law (294 A, 300 A). In the *Laws*, where he is dealing with the second-best state, he has come in his old age to admit that in most cases written and fixed laws are better than the risk of individual caprice and error (iv. 715). There is no contradiction between the *Republic*, the *Politicus*, and the *Laws*; but if we compare these three dialogues we find a change from the idealisation of the heaven-born ruler to an appreciation of ordinary government with a fixed constitution and a stable system of laws. Plato connects the word νόμος (law) with νοῦς (reason). "Law is the distribution of reason" (νοῦ διανομή, 714 A). Aristotle adopts the notion without the fanciful etymology when he calls law "reason without passion," and argues, like Plato in

the *Laws*, that the rule of law is better on the whole than personal rule, though admitting the necessity of equitable administration of fixed law (*Pol.* iii. 15, 16). In fact the whole of the *Laws* comes very close to the *Politics*, and has evidently supplied more numerous suggestions to Aristotle than any other work on political theory. The criticisms which Aristotle makes are criticisms of details, not, as in the case of the *Republic*, objections to fundamental principles. The picture which Plato gives of the rise of the city-state out of the patriarchal family (*Laws*, iii. 676-682) is simply divested of its legendary setting—the story of a deluge—and adopted by Aristotle as his scientific account of the genesis of the state (*Pol.* i. 2). The defects of Lacedæmonian institutions are more fully seen by Aristotle than by Plato; but Plato was clearly becoming more aware of them, when he wrote the *Laws*, than he appeared to be when he wrote the *Republic*. Aristotle, who was thirteen years old when the battle of Leuctra shattered the power and still more the reputation of Lacedæmon, seems never to have been given to idealising Sparta like the anti-democratic Athenians of the Socratic circle. Coming from outside, he judges Athens more fairly and with a kindlier eye than even the aged Plato of the *Laws*.

The commendation of mixed government for the practicable commonwealths that fall short of the absolutely best is common ground to the *Laws* and the *Politics* (*Laws*, vi. 756 E). It fits in with the notion of excellence as “the mean” or “moderation,” which we find already in Plato’s *Politicus* (283 E) and *Philebus* (64 E), and with the recognition of the political merits of the middle class. Plato professes to combine monarchy

with democracy in the *Laws*, so as to attain a mean between the Persian and the Athenian governments (*Laws*, iii. 697-699). Aristotle points out that the monarchical element is really wanting in Plato's state, and that Plato's mixed state is a combination of democracy with oligarchy, oligarchy meaning to both Plato and Aristotle the state which gives special privileges to property. But, as already said, all the criticisms of the details of Plato's proposals are relatively unimportant, compared with the many points of agreement between the Aristotelian ideal and that of Plato's last work.

Plato, however, does not break away from his earlier political or ethical doctrines. As we have seen, the state of the *Republic* is still his best state. And, similarly, we have found that he reasserts the old doctrine of the unity of the virtues. So, too, he recurs to the old puzzle how a man can speak of a victory over himself (i. 626 D *seq.*); and a place is found for the doctrine maintained in the *Gorgias* that no one voluntarily commits injustice (ix. 861, 862). These are Socratic elements which keep up a difference between Plato and Aristotle. But what is least Aristotelian in the *Laws* is the importance attached to Pythagorean mathematics and astronomy, the bitter hostility to the superstitious religious beliefs and practices of the vulgar, which Aristotle is prepared to sanction or to treat with contemptuous toleration⁽⁴⁾, and the stress laid on the inculcation of the reformed civil religion, with its simple doctrines of the existence of God and of the moral government of mankind in this and in any other life. Plato's *Republic* combines metaphysics with politics; his *Laws* combines natural theology with

legislation. Aristotle, without disowning his metaphysics, which is *his* only theology, prefers to treat law and politics in what modern phraseology would call a strictly "positivist" manner.

Much has been made of a few phrases in the tenth book of the *Laws*, which seem to assert the existence of an evil soul in the world alongside of and opposed to the divine or good soul (896 D, E; 898 C; 904 A *seq.*). It is supposed that Plato must have departed from his earlier philosophy and adopted a doctrine which he has expressly denied in the *Politicus* (269 E, 270 A), that there are two gods having opposite purposes⁽⁵⁾. But such arguments seem to ignore the essential difference in manner between the *Laws* and the *Politicus*. If a philosophical theologian, addressing a popular audience, should talk about the works of the devil, or speak of the eternal contest between good and evil, we should not at once accuse him of having adopted the Manichæan heresy. Plato's language in the *Laws* need not imply anything more than an attempt to put in more popular and personal language the very same theory of the nature of evil which he had held all through. In the *Republic*, by asserting that God is the author of good only (ii. 380 C), he had raised the problem of evil. The cosmology of the *Timæus*, with its recognition of the element of "the other," and the myth of the *Politicus* (268 E-274 E) were attempts to deal with the problem. In the *Laws* he speaks of the circular motion of the heavenly bodies as an "image" of the self-motion of the mind (898 B), implying that the irregularities of other movements are due to defect of mind. There is no necessity to interpret these passages in the *Laws* in a way inconsistent with the

language of the *Timæus* or the *Politicus*, or even the *Republic*. It would have been incongruous with the framework of the dialogue to have brought in the metaphysical distinction between "the same" and "the other." The change in Plato's language consists simply in his readiness to acquiesce in a way of speaking which neglects philosophical accuracy of expression in accommodation to the level of ordinary opinion. Yet there is no doubt that these passages in the *Laws* helped to countenance a crudely dualist interpretation of Platonic doctrine, such as we find in Plutarch⁽⁶⁾ and even in the author of the *Epinomis* (988 D, E)—who may possibly have slightly hardened the phrases used by Plato in the *Laws* itself. It is, in any case, a quite unnecessary hypothesis to suppose that Plato in his last days recanted that reconciliation of the One and the Many which he seemed to have reached when he wrote the *Philebus*. The opposing element, the "other," is not an independent god or demon. It was precisely by the Platonists that St. Augustine was weaned from Manichæan dualism, and it was a correct application of Plato's teaching when he asserted that evil is not a substance in the same sense as good⁽⁷⁾.

CHAPTER X

PLATONISM AFTER PLATO

THE history of Platonism is a great subject: it has never yet been completely written, and is indeed beyond the power of any single student. In order to estimate the influence of Plato upon the subsequent course of human thought, it would be necessary to treat the history not only of philosophy but of theology. Though the authority of Aristotle has been during several centuries more conspicuously acknowledged, the influence of Plato has been more widely felt: it has penetrated through a greater variety of channels, and amongst these must be included the philosophy of Aristotle himself.

The fortunes of the Academy and the Lyceum in the period immediately following the deaths of their founders gave little promise of the future conquests of these two rulers of the mind of man. Plato was succeeded in the Academy, not by his greatest pupil, the alien from Stageira, but by his nephew, the Athenian Speusippus, who seems to have taken up only portions of his master's doctrine, which thus received an exaggerated and undue prominence in his teaching. Speusippus seems to have attached himself specially to the Pythagorean tendencies of Plato; and the treat-

ment of the ideas as ideal numbers—a doctrine criticised by Aristotle—was probably his rather than Plato's own: what was merely a passing illustration in the hands of the master may have stiffened into a leading dogma in the hands of the disciple. Aristotle expressly alludes to the Pythagorising tendencies of Speusippus (*Eth. Nic.* i. 6. § 7, 1096*b*, 5; *Met.* A 7, 1072*b*, 30), and, to what may also be Pythagorean in its origin, the asceticism of his ethical theories (*Eth. Nic.* vii. 13. § 1, 1153*b*, 5).

Xenocrates of Chalcedon, the personal friend of Aristotle and the biographer of Plato, was the next scholarch. He seems to have been more of a genuine Platonist than his predecessor, not quite abandoning the doctrine of Ideas, though with the same love of Pythagorean formulæ and the same tendency to substitute a sort of mystical mathematics for philosophy. Many of Aristotle's criticisms of Platonic doctrine may very likely be intended to apply to Speusippus and to Xenocrates rather than to Plato himself. Xenocrates supposed the world to be ruled not only by gods but by "dæmons," good and evil, exaggerating like others the dualism of Plato's language.

Some of the succeeding scholarchs are little more than names to us; but about the middle of the third century B.C. a new direction was given to the Academic teaching by the philosophical sceptics, Arcesilas and Carneades, the leading representatives of what came to be known as the "Middle Academy." In opposition to the dogmatism of the new Stoic school, Arcesilas maintained that we know nothing, not even our own inability to know. Carneades maintained the more moderate view that certitude is unattainable, but that

various degrees of probability are within our reach. The Middle Academy may owe a good deal to Pyrrho (*fl. circ.* 300 B.C.), something also, perhaps, to the Megaric tradition, and most to reaction against Stoicism; but it could claim to be quite as true a representative of the Socratic and dialectical elements in Plato, as the older Academy had been of his Pythagorean tendencies.

The New Academy is mainly known to us through the writings of Cicero, who professed himself a disciple of this school, and who is chiefly interesting, in the history of philosophy, as the first conspicuous representative of that eclecticism which sought to bring together the tenets of all the preceding schools, except the dogmatic Atheists and the Epicureans, in a sort of popular religious philosophy which should help a man to believe in a divine government of the world, and hold out some reasonable hope of a life after death. This combination of Platonism—especially the Platonism of the *Phædo*, the *Phædrus*, the *Timæus*, and the *Laws*, the religious and ethical as distinct from the dialectical Platonism of the more purely metaphysical works—with such Aristotelian and Stoic doctrines as could be blended with it, has, through Cicero, exercised a vast influence on Western thought, and was one of the precursors of the more elaborate, more systematic, and more speculative system of the Neo-Platonists.

Neo-Platonism, however, unlike the earlier developments of the Platonic school, was not a purely Greek philosophy, or, at least, it was Greek philosophy passed through non-Greek minds. It was descended from the offspring of the marriage between Hellenic speculation and Hebrew and other Oriental religions, which was

brought about through the meeting of East and West, due to the conquests of Alexander, and, most of all, to the foundation of the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria⁽¹⁾. Jews, such as Philo, coming under the influence of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic philosophy, and seeking to introduce Greek wisdom to their countrymen; cultured Greeks like Plutarch, who strove to build up a credible religion for themselves out of the ruins of discredited faiths; Christian thinkers like Clement and Origen, endeavouring to find formulæ which might commend their beliefs to educated Greeks,—all turned to the *Timæus* of Plato, and tended to make this the central position from which they looked at everything else in his philosophy. With Platonism thus seen somewhat out of perspective were combined elements from Magian and Egyptian religions; and out of these varied materials was built up the Neo-Platonism of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. Though we find the preparation for Neo-Platonism in Philo, in Plutarch, in Numenius, in the Christian Gnostics, in the Alexandrian religious philosophies of an earlier period, Neo-Platonism in the strict sense is later than the Christian philosophy of Clement, and was developed alongside of the Christian philosophy of Origen; it owes something to this Christian philosophy, and, occupying much ground in common with it, came to attempt the defence of the old religions against the new. There was much coming and going between Christians and Neo-Platonists. Ammonius Saccas, who founded the school in Alexandria (about the beginning of the third century A.D.), had been brought up a Christian, and had the Christian Origen among his pupils, as well as the philosopher Plotinus. Por-

phyry was a learned though hostile critic of Christian theology. Amelius, another of the pupils of Plotinus, quoted Christian texts in support of his philosophic doctrines. At a later time the Emperor Julian left Christianity for the Neo-Platonism of the school of Iamblichus. On the other hand, the Christian Synesius was the pupil of Hypatia, and refused to surrender his philosophy even when he became a bishop. St. Augustine owed his conversion from Manichæanism to the reading of a Latin translation of Plotinus, and he explicitly recognises the affinity between Platonism and Christian theology. "None," he says, "are nearer to us than the Platonists." In the Platonic books he found the doctrine of the Divinity of the Eternal Word, but not the doctrine that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us⁽²⁾. Had he gone back to the earlier Alexandrian Platonism he might have found some of the sources of the language in which that doctrine came to be formulated. Through St. Augustine, but still more through the works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, Neo-Platonism produced a direct and continuous influence on the mystical tendencies of Christian thought in the Middle Ages.

When people contrast Platonist and Aristotelian, they are thinking of Neo-Platonism or of Plato seen through the interpretations of Plotinus and Proclus; but the inaccuracy of the popular contrast is curiously shown by the fact that those very Neo-Platonists borrowed a great deal from Aristotle, whose metaphysics or theology enabled them to systematise Plato; and it was Neo-Platonist commentators who were most anxious to show that there was no fundamental discrepancy between Plato and Aristotle.

Plotinus, who was born in Egypt, of what race we know not, and educated at Alexandria, and who taught at Rome; his pupil Porphyry, a Syrian, best known to us from his *Introduction to Aristotle's Categories*; Proclus the Lycian, the "scholastic among the Greek philosophers and the chief doctor of the Athenian school," who is said to have wished that all the books of antiquity had perished except the Chaldean oracles and Plato's *Timæus*,—these may fitly be called philosophers, and though of diverse races may be named in the great succession of Greek thinkers. In the fading light they were not unworthy to take the name of Platonist, and Plotinus especially may be regarded as the initiator, though under Plato's inspiration, of a new type of speculative metaphysics. The "divine" Iamblichus the Syrian, whom the Emperor Julian counted the equal of Plato, and others of his school, are theosophists rather than philosophers, defenders of superstitions which Plato would certainly have prohibited in his ideal state and even in his second-best state. All Neo-Platonism—though least in the case of Plotinus—is under Oriental influences. As a philosophy we may indeed call it Hellenic; but there is a great deal in Neo-Platonism that is not philosophy. It may be noted how many of its teachers were of Syrian origin. So far as it is Greek, much of it might be called more correctly Neo-Pythagoreanism; and it was a revival of a Pythagoreanism of a more primitive and less scientific type than that studied and criticised by Plato and Aristotle—a combination of mysticism and magic. In the age and surroundings in which he lived, Iamblichus himself deserves considerable credit for laughing when his disciples asked him if

he had not been lifted up in the air and transfigured, and for refusing to accept in a literal and materialistic sense the story that Pythagoras was the son of Apollo. But one cannot look into his *Life of Pythagoras*, with its record of miracles and its uncritical tone of unction, and not feel that we are here in contact with the dimly intellectual though fervently religious atmosphere that produced Oriental and mediæval "Lives of the Saints," rather than with scientific philosophical thought as Plato and Aristotle understood it. There is a mystical element in Plato: there is a mystical element in Aristotle, of great significance in its influence on the later world. But it is mysticism of an intellectual kind, led up to by processes of hard reasoning, not the mysticism which exalts darkness above light and divination above science. (See Plato, *Timæus*, 71 E, quoted p. 129, above.) Plato has not escaped the fate of other great teachers. His poetical figures of speech have been taken as literally true; whilst his more important lessons have been neglected. His enthusiastic commentators and disciples held but flickering and smoky torches, and yet they handed on some of the light he kindled, in perhaps the only way in which the dark ages could have received it.

When Justinian closed the schools of Athens in 529 A.D., the last scholarch of the Academy, Damascius of Damascus, with six other Neo-Platonists (among them Simplicius, the Aristotelian commentator) wandered away to Persia in the vain hope of finding a ruler nearer to Plato's ideal than the Christian Cæsar. This last migration of Greek philosophy is more important for the history of Aristotelianism than for that of Platonism: it was the means by which the

Aristotelian writings were carried into the East, translated into Eastern tongues and kept for the Arabian scholars of the Middle Ages, who reintroduced them to the West. The MSS. of Plato remained and were copied in the Byzantine Empire, and awaited the time when they could again be welcomed by a new "Academy" in a Tuscan Athens. Meanwhile, Western Christendom possessed a Latin translation of the *Timæus* (³), and through the works of Cicero and St. Augustine and Boethius received some faint influences from Plato's own spirit. Platonism reached the Middle Ages, however, mainly through those Christian Neo-Platonic writings—probably of the end of the fifth century—which were ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, and so accepted as the work of a contemporary and a convert of the Apostle Paul. The book *On the Heavenly Hierarchy* and others were translated into Latin in the ninth century by John the Irish-Scot, who was a student also of Plato's *Timæus*. It was thus that the earliest philosophical thinker of the new nations introduced Platonic and Neo-Platonic mysticism into a strangely alien world. In the great awakening of the West which began with the eleventh century, Plato attracted little attention compared with Aristotle, and was never made the subject of mediæval lectures, so that his influence worked only through indirect channels. Though it never ceased, it largely escaped notice or acknowledgment. In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Socrates and Plato stand nearer to Aristotle than the other sages, but Aristotle is "the master of those that know" (⁴). But already towards the end of the fourteenth century Traini and towards the end of the fifteenth century Benozzo Gozzoli represent

Plato with his *Timæus* and Aristotle with his *Ethics* standing on either hand of St. Thomas Aquinas—Plato on the left, Aristotle on the right of the saint. Above them are the Trinity, the Evangelists, Moses, and St. Paul. Beneath is the Pope in Council⁽⁵⁾. Such was the historical setting in which the imagination of the Italian painters saw the two Greek philosophers. The Renaissance dawned early in Italy, and the star of Plato had again risen to rival the star of Aristotle in glory.

The first important signs of revolt against the Aristotelianism, which had become dominant in the mediæval schools, came from the rebirth of Platonism in Italy. Civilised Mohammedans had reintroduced Aristotelian science and metaphysics to Latin Christendom, which had for long possessed only the Aristotelian Logic, and that in a fragmentary form. Before the incursion of barbaric Mohammedans Greek scholars fled to Italy, bringing with them the works of Plato. Even before the Turks took Constantinople in 1453, Cosimo de' Medici had founded an Academy and educated Marsilio Ficino for the express purpose of translating the philosopher. The council which attempted to reconcile the Eastern and Western Churches in 1438 failed in its immediate object, but it had brought Florentine and Byzantine scholars together. After completing his translation of Plato, Ficino translated Plotinus⁽⁶⁾; and the sequence of labours is significant. The Florentine Platonists read and interpreted Plato entirely in the Neo-Platonic spirit. The brilliant Pico della Mirandola was doubly a Neo-Platonist; for he combined with his enthusiasm for Plotinus a study of the Jewish Cabal-

istic doctrine which was largely permeated with Neo-Platonism.

Aristotle benefited among a few by being known in Greek, and careful scholars now came to distinguish the genuine from the mediæval philosopher. But, on the whole, the spirit of the Renaissance was against his reputation and authority. It is one of the strangest ironies of history that many of those who in Italy and elsewhere began to devote themselves to the study of nature fought against the name of Aristotle, that enthusiastic student of natural science, under the banner of Plato, to whom physical speculations had seemed but a harmless amusement. So much had Aristotle suffered from his blind admirers. A devotion to Neo-Platonism and in some cases to Jewish Cabalistic writers, to theosophy and magic, was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries often combined with a genuinely scientific spirit—a mixture of symbolism and science such as had existed among the Pythagoreans of old. Nicolas of Cusa, Pico della Mirandola, Giordano Bruno and Campanella may all be counted Platonists, enthusiasts for nature and opponents of the authority of Aristotle. For it was against the scholastic traditionalism that humanist culture and scientific freedom had to fight; and the scholastic philosophy was fossil Aristotelianism. By extreme partisans the contempt of Aristotle was held to be the beginning of wisdom.

A curious interlude in the history of English thought between Bacon and Locke was played by the group of scholarly and philosophical theologians who are known as the Cambridge Platonists. This Platonism, which blossomed in sheltered places of learning amid

the fierce theological controversies of the seventeenth century, was entirely Neo-Platonic in character, sometimes rising to the level of Plotinus or Origen, sometimes sinking to the depths of Iamblichus and his followers, but seldom approaching the purer philosophical atmosphere of Plato himself. Milton, who left Christ's College, Cambridge, just about the time when Henry More was entering it, has enshrined in *Il Penseroso* the prevailing conception of Platonism—

“Or let my lamp at midnight hour
Be seen from some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.”

In less musical verses Henry More joins Plato with Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus, Plotinus and Chaldaean magic—

“So if what's consonant to Plato's school
(Which well agrees with learned Pythagore,
Egyptian Trismegist and th' antique roll
Of Chaldee wisdom, all which time hath tore,
But Plato and deep Plotin do restore)
Which is my scope I sing out lustily:
If any twitten me for such strange lore
And me all blameless brand with infamy,
God purge that man from fault of foul malignity”(7).

Thomas Taylor, known as “the Platonist,” who died in 1835, was a Platonist in this same sense, reading

Plato through the mists of Neo-Platonic enthusiasms. The genuine revival of the study of Plato in a spirit more akin to Plato's own is due to the rise of historical criticism and to the post-Kantian idealism of Germany. Schleiermacher translated Plato's works into German, with scholarly introductions, and in Zeller's words "initiated a new era in our knowledge of Greek philosophy." To Hegel and those whom he influenced directly and indirectly we owe a better understanding of Plato and of Aristotle in themselves and in their relation to one another than was possible to those who read Plato as a theosophist and Aristotle as a schoolman. Hegel admired and appreciated the Neo-Platonists for their distinctive metaphysical speculation, but he did not confuse Plato with them. He has been reproached for interpreting the Greek philosophers too much in the light of his own system. But in doing so Hegel was only restoring to them what was their own^(*); for, if we have to express the difference between Hegel and Kant in any brief phrase, the least inaccurate thing to say would be that this difference resulted from the assiduous and first-hand study of Plato and Aristotle, which occupied so much of Hegel's time of preparation. And Hegel's time was not mispent; for the modern world has still much to learn from the Academy and the Lyceum. We do not now, like the mediæval doctors, settle controversies by quoting texts from "the philosopher": we do not, like the enthusiasts of the Italian Renaissance, keep a lamp always lighted before the bust of Plato. But the dialectical searchings of Plato and his pupil's perpetual interpretation of facts by theory and testing of theory by facts, remain our greatest models

of philosophical method. Our thinking and our language are permeated by Platonic and Aristotelian influences, and a chief security against the idolatry of bad metaphysics is frequent intercourse with the two Greek masters, who in the last hundred years have found their best interpreters and their most genuine, because their most independent, disciples.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

(¹) There are also short "Lives" in the collection ascribed to Hesychius Milesius, and in the *Lexicon* of Suidas, *s.v.* Πλάτων. Flach, in his edition of Hesych. Mil. *De Viris Illustr.*, holds, with other recent scholars, that this so-called Hesychius borrows from Suidas and Diogenes Laertius. The question is unimportant here, as both "Lives" are worthless and very late epitomes. We are told by Simplicius (*Scholium in Arist.*, ed. Brandis, 427a, 15; 470a, 27) that Xenocrates wrote περὶ τοῦ Πλάτωνος βίου. But we do not even know if that means a complete biography. See Zeller, *Plato* (Eng. trans.), p. 1, *note*.

(²) The date of Plato's birth rests on the authority of Apollodorus, whose Chronology, which appears to be generally trustworthy, is quoted by Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 2. The year of his birth must have been the *first* year of the eighty-eighth Olympiad, if he was twenty-eight at the death of Socrates (Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 6, quoting Hermodorus), and died in his eighty-first year in 347 B.C., the usually accepted date. The story that he was born in the same year in which Pericles died (Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 3), *i.e.* 429 B.C., is one of those things likely to be invented. On the whole matter, see Zeller, *Plato* (Eng. trans.), p. 2, *note* 2.

(³) *Vit. Anon.* (ed. Westermann), p. 6. Ἀπόλλων γὰρ δηλοῖ ὁ κεχωρισμένος τῶν πολλῶν· τὸ γὰρ ᾧ στερητικόν ἐστι μόριον. Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead*, v. 5. 6, Ὅθεν καὶ Ἀπόλλωνα

οἱ Πυθαγορικοὶ συμβολικῶς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐσήμαινον, ἀποφάσει τῶν πολλῶν.

(4) The first story is that of Apuleius; the second is that of Olympiodorus and the Anonymous biographer. The later our authorities, as a rule, the more they have to tell us.

(5) The *Seventh Epistle*, which has been supposed to have more claims to genuineness than some of the others, and which, if a forgery, is probably an early forgery containing sound tradition, gives Plato's reasons for withdrawing from the attempt to take part in the politics of Athens. He was disgusted, first by the conduct of "the Thirty," and afterwards by that of the restored democracy, and especially by their treatment of Socrates (*Ep.* vii. 324 B-326 c). The whole passage contains nothing which might not have been constructed out of Plato's writings, except the curious account of the oligarchical revolution in Athens, which looks like a confused version of the account given by Arist. 'Αθ. πολ., c. 35 (ed. Kenyon). Plato's *Gorgias* has been described as his "Apologia," giving his reasons for avoiding political life as it then was at Athens. Cf. Thompson's edition, p. xvii.

(6) This seems to be the meaning of the story which Diogenes Laertius gives, iii. 1. § 20, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ Δίωνα ἀποστεῖλαί φασι τὸ ἀργύριον καὶ τὸν μὴ προσέσθαι· ἀλλὰ καὶ κηπίδιον αὐτῷ τὸ ἐν Ἀκαδημίᾳ πρίασθαι. If Anniceris had bought the garden with Dion's money (as Zeller says), μὴ προσέσθαι would have to be rendered "he did not keep it *for himself*" (but the word προσέσθαι means more than that); and the καὶ in the next clause would lose its meaning. It is just possible that Diogenes Laertius means that Dion bought the garden for Plato. It is difficult to be certain what Diogenes Laertius or his authorities mean here; and if we were certain of the meaning, it would not follow that we had got the truth.

(7) Plutarch in his *Life of Dion*, c. 20, tells this story of the younger Dionysius.

(⁸) Cf. Plato, *Lysis*, 205 c, d, where such tales of divine descent are treated as ridiculous.

(⁹) Cf. *Rep.* 508. The Emperor Julian refers to this symbolism in his mystical discourse "On the Sovereign Sun."

(¹⁰) Plato, i. p. 117, note.

(¹¹) Diog. Laert. vi. 1. § 1. I have heard the late Professor Jowett telling to some of his Balliol pupils stories about "the old Master" (*i.e.* Dr. Jenkins), which we had been telling about himself perhaps the day before.

(¹²) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 37. In § 57 he gives this same statement on the authority of Favorinus, a writer of "Miscellaneous History" of the time of Hadrian. Probably he only knew of Aristoxenus through Favorinus. Among the works of Protagoras, said to be extant in Diog. Laert. ix. 8. § 55, is named *περὶ πολιτείας*, but we know nothing of its character. If it had been in any sense an anticipation or the model of Plato's *Republic*, we should have expected some reference to it in Aristotle's *Pol.* ii., where Plato is so severely criticised, and where other Ideal States are discussed. The "myth" which Plato puts into the mouth of Protagoras in the dialogue named after him (*Prot.* 320 c-322 d) is very likely founded on some actual work of the great Sophist; but it has more affinity with the account given of the origin of governments in the third book of the *Laws* than with anything in the *Republic*. In Athenæus, *Deipn.* xi., where ill-natured things about Plato have been scraped together, Theopompus of Chios is quoted as accusing Plato of plagiarism from Aristippus, Antisthenes, and Bryson of Heraclea. Theopompus was a pupil of Isocrates, as Aristoxenus was of Aristotle, and perhaps a mistaken loyalty to their masters made them attack Plato.

(¹³) In *Laws*, viii. 835-841, Plato rebukes the licence of Hellenic morals and sentiment, and sets up an ideal of marriage which rises above what we find in Xenophon and Aristotle, and has an almost modern character.

(¹⁴) *Vit. Anon.*

(¹⁵) Suidas, *Lexicon*, s.v. Πλάτων, 3000, ed. Gaisford; Hesych. Mil. *De Vir. Illustr.* 55.

(¹⁶) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 41. The "wills" in Diog. Laert. are much more likely to be genuine than the Letters which are quoted. The tenure of property depended on the genuineness of wills. The wills of Plato and Aristotle contain nothing about their books. A forger of the Alexandrian age would surely have put in something of that sort, especially as the wills of later philosophers, such as Theophrastus, Strato, Lyco, contain clauses about their manuscripts. It was only after Aristotle that philosophy became so much a matter of books and libraries.

(¹⁷) Cf. Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 6, and ii. 10. § 106.

(¹⁸) Cic. *De Rep.* i. § 16. The argument against the residence at Megara, and against a "Megaric period" immediately following the death of Socrates, is very forcibly put in Lutoslawski's *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, pp. 43, 44.

(¹⁹) Plato, *Phædrus*, 227 D. "If you will walk all the way to Megara, and when you have reached the wall come back, as Herodicus recommends, without going in, I will keep you company." The double walk would be a pretty severe one.

(²⁰) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 62. Aristophanes, the librarian at Alexandria about 264 B.C., puts the *Epistles* in one of his Platonic trilogies. So that a collection of Letters must already have been in existence, though not necessarily all that we now have. The detailed list of *Epistles* in § 61 comes from the much later catalogue of Thrasyllus. It is said, apparently on the authority of Aristophanes, though that is not quite clear, that some dialogues νοθεύονται ὁμολογουμένως. This does not imply that all the others are free from doubt. Those who wish to read a full account of the relations between Plato, Dion, and Dionysius, based mainly on the *Epistles* and on Plutarch, will find it in Grote's *History of Greece*, Part II. chap. lxxxiv.

CHAPTER II

(1) *Soph.* 217 c, alludes to *Parm.* The reference is apparently to the dialogue, whereas, in *Theæt.* 183 E, the allusion seems only to be to the meeting between Socrates and Parmenides. *Pol.* 284 B alludes to *Soph.* (καθάπερ ἐν τῷ σοφιστῇ = "as we said in our discussion about the Sophist"). See Professor Lewis Campbell's edition of *Soph.* and *Pol.*

(2) Arist. *Pol.* i. 1. § 2, seems to allude to Pl. *Pol.* 258 E-259 B. The germ, but only the germ, of the view Aristotle criticises may be found in Xen. *Mem.* iii. 4. § 12. ἡ γὰρ τῶν ιδίων ἐπιμέλεια πλήθει μόνον διαφέρει τῆς τῶν κοινῶν; while almost the very words of the *Politicus* are cited by Aristotle. Aristotle's classification of governments seems also to start from the *Politicus*. See Chap. V. p. 105, above.

(3) See Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus*, s.v. Πλάτων. The results of an investigation of the Aristotelian references are well summed up in Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy* (Eng. trans.), i. p. 105: (1) Aristotle quotes with Plato's name and title of book, *Rep.*, *Tim.*, *Leg.*; (2) with title of book, but without Plato's name, and yet with obvious reference to Plato, *Phædo*, *Sympos.* (cited as οἱ ἐρωτικοὶ λόγοι), *Phædr.*, *Gorg.*; (3) with title of book but not with indisputable reference to Plato as author, *Meno*, *Hippias* (i.e. *Hipp. min.*), *Menexenus* (as ὁ Ἐπιτάφιος); (4) with name of Plato but without title of book Aristotle alludes to passages in *Theæt.*, *Phileb.*, *Soph.* (?); (5) without name of Plato or title of book Aristotle seems to refer to passages in *Polit.*, *Apol.*, *Lysis*, *Laches*, *Protag.* (?), *Euthyd.* (?), *Cratyl.* (?).

(4) The list of νοθευόμενοι ὁμολογουμένως in Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 62, comes after, but not immediately after, the account of the trilogies of Aristophanes. The fact that Thrasyllus put a work in one of his tetralogies does not necessarily imply

that he considered it indisputably genuine. According to Diog. Laert. ix. 7. § 37, Thrasyllus argued that in the *Anterastae*, "if it is Plato's," Democritus is alluded to as the πένταθλος in philosophy (*Erast.* 135 E, 136 A). Grote (*Plato*, i. p. 452), defending his thesis, tries unsuccessfully to evade the force of these words, which show clearly that Thrasyllus did not guarantee the genuineness of all the dialogues which were not admittedly spurious.

(⁵) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 56, Θρασύλλος δέ φησι καὶ κατὰ τὴν τραγικὴν τετραλογίαν ἐκδοῦναι αὐτὸν τοὺς διαλόγους. The arrangement in tetralogies is adopted in the new Oxford edition of the text of Plato (Professor Burnet's).

(⁶) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 35.

(⁷) *Ibid.* iii. 1. § 38. Cobet reads λόγος: "there is a story that, etc." With the reading λόγον ("dialogue") it is not clear whether the tale comes on the authority of Aristoxenus or on that of Euphorion and Panætius. When will some scholar give us a really good edition of Diogenes Laertius?

(⁸) Cf. Thompson's edition of the *Phædrus*, p. 170 *et seq.*; Lutoslawski, *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, p. 348.

(⁹) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 37.

(¹⁰) Hermann puts the *Meno* earlier than his Megaric group, which includes *Cratyl.*, *Theæt.*, *Soph.*, *Polit.*, *Parm.* But in the *Meno*, as in the *Cratylus* also, the theory of ideas is not yet fully formed, and the existence of ideas *apart from the sensible world* is not laid down as in the *Phædo* and *Republic*.

(¹¹) Professor Campbell gives an account of the question and of his relation to it in a paper read before the Oxford Philological Society in June 1890, and reprinted as an Excursus in Jowett and Campbell's edition of *The Republic of Plato*, vol. ii. pp. 46-66.

(¹²) Galen is said to have written περὶ τῶν ἐν Φιλήβῳ μεταβάσεων (R. G. Bury, *The Philebus of Plato*, p. xi).

CHAPTER III

(1) Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, p. 158.

(2) Other companions of Socrates besides Plato wrote Socratic dialogues. Panætius (*ap.* Diog. Laert. ii. 7. § 64) considered those ascribed to Plato, Xenophon (he must have meant the *Mem.*; *Symp.*; *Æcon.*), Antisthenes, and Æschines genuine; he was doubtful about those ascribed to Phædo and Euclides. All the others he rejected as spurious.

Diog. Laert. iii. 1. §§ 47, 48, says that Zeno of Elea is reported to have been the first to write dialogues; "but," he continues, "Aristotle in his first book, *Concerning Poets*, says that Alexamenus of Styra, or of Teios, was the first." *Athenæus*, xi. § 112 (p. 505), quotes from the same work (probably a dialogue) of Aristotle's the words: Οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ ἐμμέτρους τοὺς καλουμένους Σώφρονος μίμους μὴ φῶμεν εἶναι λόγους καὶ μιμήσεις, ἢ τοὺς Ἀλεξάμενου τοῦ Τητίου τοὺς πρώτους γραφέντας τῶν Σωκρατικῶν διαλόγων. The ascription of *Socratic dialogues* to Alexamenus suggests to me the suspicion that the passage quoted as from Aristotle by Athenæus is a mixture of that cited by Diogenes, and of the passage in *Poet.* c. 1. 1447b, 9: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν ἔχοιμεν ὀνομάσαι κοινὸν τοὺς Σώφρονος καὶ Ξενάρχου μίμους καὶ τοὺς Σωκρατικούς λόγους. That Zeno wrote dialogues may seem very doubtful. See Zeller, *Plato* (Eng. trans.), p. 155, note 12.

(3) Cf. Plato, *Parm.* 135 D. Aristotle in his "Sophist" (probably a dialogue) called Zeno the discoverer of dialectic (Diog. Laert. ix. 5. § 25). The mention of Zeno in Plato's *Parm.* may have suggested the story that Zeno wrote dialogues, though that is certainly not implied in the references to the writings of Zeno in *Parm.* 127, 128. The Greek dialectic is well described as "the game of question and answer" by the late Professor Minto in his *Logic Inductive and Deductive*, pp. 3-8.

(⁴) *Adv. Math.* vii. 16, quoted in Ritter and Preller, *Hist. Phil. Græc.* ed. 8, § 316.

(⁵) Apuleius, *De Dogm. Plat.* i. c. 4, says of Plato: "From the natural philosophy of the Heracliteans, the mental of the Pythagoreans, and the moral of Socrates he made one body." There seems a doubt about the reading in this passage. Before "moralis" the Aldine edition has "rationalis atque." Hildebrand (Leipsic, 1843) gives "naturalis a Pythagoreis, dialectica atque moralis ab ipso Socratis fonte," omitting all reference to the Heracliteans here. Hesych. Mil. *De Vir. Illustr.* 55 names the same threefold sources of Platonic doctrine as the Aldine text of Apuleius.

(⁶) Cf., e.g., *Rep.* i. 332; *Protag.* 339 A-347 A.

(⁷) Professor Burnet, in his *Ethics of Aristotle*, p. xxxviii, took ἐπαγωγή as literally signifying the citation of witnesses in a court of law. But he has directed my attention to a paper by Professor Cook Wilson (briefly reported in the *Classical Review* for November 1901, vol. xv. p. 430) in which it is argued that ἐπάγειν, in the active voice, means to lead a person to see or admit something, the direct object of the verb being the person debated with. Professor Burnet says he is convinced by Professor Cook Wilson's argument. It still seems to me, however, that alike in the Socratic ἐπακτικὸς λόγος and in the Aristotelian ἐπαγωγή the essential thing is the appealing to particular cases—however that notion may have come into the word.

(⁸) Ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν Σωκράτης τὰ καθόλου οὐ χωριστὰ ἐποίει οὐδὲ τοὺς ὁρισμούς· οἱ δ' ἐχώρισαν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὄντων ιδέας προσηγόρευσαν.

(⁹) Cf. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, pp. 181, 182.

(¹⁰) *Ibid.* p. 321.

(¹¹) Lutoslawski, *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, p. 212.

(¹²) Cf. Zeller's *Plato* (Eng. trans.), p. 126, note 81.

(¹³) Diog. Laert. viii. 1. § 46.

(¹⁴) Diog. Laert. viii. 1. § 10, gives Timæus (probably the historian, *fl. circ.* 300 B.C.) as his authority for ascribing this saying to Pythagoras. There is no reason to suppose that the Pythagorean brotherhoods involved more than a certain amount of common funds and the general principle of mutual aid—the “private possession and common use,” which Aristotle prefers to the Platonic communism; but it was natural for the Neo-Pythagoreans of later times to interpret the precept in the stricter sense which Plato’s application of it suggested. Cf. Iamblichus, *Vit. Pythag.* c. 19.

(¹⁵) The tradition that Plato had the words, “Let no one ignorant of geometry enter,” inscribed on his door comes from Tzetzes, *Chil.* 8. 975; but an ethical interpretation is there given to the words (recalling *Gorg.* 508 A):—

Μηδεις ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσὶτω μοῦ τὴν στέγην.
 Τουτέστιν, ἄδικος μηδεις παρεισερχέσθω τῇδε
 Ἰσότης γὰρ καὶ δίκαιον ἐστὶ γεωμετρία.

(¹⁶) Cf. K. Joël, *Der echte und der Xenophantische Socrates*, i. p. 13.

(¹⁷) *Cyneg.* c. 13.

(¹⁸) Diog. Laert. vi. 2. § 72. The proverb, κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων, is interpreted as a principle of strict communism, as it is by Plato; but the Cynic ideal state is a “return to nature” of the anarchical kind. Cf. *ibid.* 9. §§ 103–105. The communism of the family is a characteristic of the “golden age” or “state of nature,” described in Plato, *Polit.* 271 E.

(¹⁹) Herodotus, iv. 104; Euripides, *Fragm.* 655 (Nauck), referred to in Jowett and Campbell, *Republic of Plato*, ii. p. 5, note.

(²⁰) In the *Symposium* ascribed to Xenophon, Socrates, admiring the acrobatic feats of a dancing-girl, remarks that her performance proves that “woman’s nature is nowise inferior to man’s” (c. 2. § 8). The words immediately following are variously taken to mean “only she lacks strength and judgment,” or “she has no lack of strength and judgment.” Even

the first, which is certainly the more obvious, interpretation of the Greek would not make Xenophon's Socrates differ on this matter from Plato's (cf. *Rep.* v. 456 c-e, where the argument is simply that there is no absolute difference between the capacities of the sexes). Xenophon, in the closing sentence of his *Cynegeticus*, says a word in favour of the hunting woman. I see no reason why Xenophon should not have written the *Symposium* assigned to him (cf. Chap. VIII. p. 155, above). It may have stimulated Plato to write his "Banquet." If it was written *after* Plato's, it is the work of a person greatly lacking in taste.

(²¹) Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, p. 83.

(²²) G. Teichmüller, *Literarische Fehden im Vierten Jahrhundert vor Chr.* ii. chap. iii.

(²³) Athenæus, *Deipn.* xi. 116 (507).

(²⁴) The date of Xenophon's *Mem.* cannot perhaps be precisely settled. Mr. Dakyns, in his essay in *Hellenica*, p. 328, gives 390 B.C. as the approximate date. The passage in Diog. Laert. ii. 6. § 48, probably implies a tradition that Xenophon's *Mem.* preceded the Platonic reports of Socratic conversations. Of course the book may not have been all written or published at once.

(²⁵) Aristoph. *Ranae*, 1431.

(²⁶) Diog. Laert. ii. 8. § 65.

(²⁷) *Ibid.* ii. 8. § 67. The story is told of Strato, by others of Plato. The remark, if ascribed to Strato by any intelligent person, would have to be made to the younger Aristippus, the grandson of Plato's contemporary. Cf. Horace, *Epist.* i. 17. 23, "Omnis Aristippum decuit color et status et res."

(²⁸) In Athenæus, *Deipn.* xi. § 112 (p. 504), Plato is blamed for not naming Xenophon in his *Phædo*. We have no reason to suppose that Xenophon had returned to Athens in time to be present at the death of Socrates; there is indeed no evidence that he ever came back to Athens at all.

(²⁹) Cf. Grote, *Plato*, iii. pp. 549, 550.

(³⁰) Simplic. in *Schol. in Arist.* 66b, 47. The story is told by others with ἀνθρωπότης, τραπεζότης, κυαθότης as illustrations.

(³¹) Diog. Laert. vi. 1. § 16, names among the works of Antisthenes a dialogue called Σάθων ἢ περὶ τοῦ ἀντιλέγειν. Athenæus, *Deipn.* v. § 63 (p. 220), says that in this title he was changing Plato's name ἀσυρῶς καὶ φορτικῶς. Cf. *ibid.* xi. § 115 (p. 507).

(³²) Diog. Laert. ii. 12. § 119. Zeller (*Socrates* [Eng. trans.], p. 221, *note*) tries to make out that Stilpo denied the reality of particular things. The passage seems to me clearly to show that he ridiculed the Platonic doctrine. "This which you show me is not *the* cabbage: the real cabbage is everlasting." There is no need to suspect Diogenes's words, ἀνῆρει καὶ τὰ εἶδη.

(³³) Cf. Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* iii. 1. 8, "Empedoclis, ut traditur, discipulus."

(³⁴) Athenæus, *Deipn.* xi. § 113 (p. 505), has a story that Gorgias read the dialogue named after him and remarked, "Plato does know how to lampoon" (ὥς καλῶς οἶδε Πλάτων ἰαμβίζειν). He gives another version, according to which Gorgias thought it worth while to say that he had never said what was ascribed to him in the dialogue. He adds that a similar story is told about Phædo. These anecdotes look like variants of the story of Socrates and the *Lysis* (see above, p. 27). Of Hippias the two dialogues named after him give a similar portrait to that in the *Protagoras*—perhaps a little less artistic.

(³⁵) Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers* (Eng. trans.), i. p. 458.

(³⁶) Cf. Henry Sidgwick, art. "Sophists," in *Journal of Philology*, vols. iv. and v.

(³⁷) It is noteworthy that in Arist. *Eth. Nic.* ix. 1. §§ 5, 7, 1164a, 24, 30, "the sophists" are contrasted with Protagoras.

(³⁸) Bosanquet, *Companion to Plato's Republic*, p. 224, "The essence of sophistry is uncriticised commonplace." On

the function of the Sophists in Greek education and their modern analogues, cf. what is said by Nettleship, *Philosophical Remains*, ii. pp. 23–26.

(³⁹) Jebb, *Attic Orators*, ii. pp. 37, 38.

(⁴⁰) *Helen. Encom.* § 5. For other passages in *Isocrates*, see Jebb, *ut supra*, p. 50 *et seq.*

(⁴¹) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 8.

(⁴²) Diog. Laert. iii. 1. § 25.

(⁴³) *Ibid.* ix. 7. § 40.

(⁴⁴) It is not quite clear that the doctrine of a plurality of coexistent worlds was peculiar to Democritus. See Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, pp. 64–68.

(⁴⁵) On the supposed allusion to Democritus in the *Anterastae*, see above. The Atheistic philosophers referred to in *Laws*, x. 886 D, E may include the followers of Democritus; but the reference is very vague.

(⁴⁶) Plato may have come to know the works of Sophron in Sicily (cf. Gomperz, *Griechische Denker*, ii. p. 215). On Sophron's supposed influence on Plato's dramatic style, cf. the passages referred to in note 2 on this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

(¹) The opinion that there cannot be two opposites to one thing (δύο ὑπεναντία ἐνὶ πράγματι) is corrected in *Alcib.* II., where it is shown that differences of kind do not exclude differences of degree (139 B–140 D). The dialogue is probably spurious, but the writer has not used the Aristotelian precision of language. *Rep.* iv. 436 B–437 A shows that Plato was feeling his way towards the distinction between contraries and contradictories. But he cannot be said to have clearly reached the conception of the contradictory until we come to the dichotomies of the *Sophistes*.

(²) Cf. Arist. *Anal. Pr.* i. 32. 47a, 8, δεῖ πᾶν τὸ ἀληθές

αὐτὸ ἐαντῷ ὁμολογούμενον εἶναι πάντα. *Eth. Nic.* i. 8. § 1, τῷ μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεῖ πάντα συνάδει τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, τῷ δὲ ψευδεὶ ταχὺ διαφωνεῖ τὰληθές.

(³) See especially *Anal. Post.* ii. 19. 99b, 20 *et seq.*

(⁴) Cf. Fouillée, *Le Mouvement Idéaliste*, p. lx.

(⁵) Plut. *Sympos.* viii. Probl. 2, πῶς Πλάτων ἔλεγε τὸν θεὸν ἀεὶ γεωμετρεῖν.

(⁶) Democritus ap. Sext. Empir. *Adv. Math.* viii. 6, speaks of the atoms as πάσης αἰσθητῆς ποιότητος ἔρημον ἔχουσῶν φύσιν. In Plut. *Plac.* i. 3. 28, the atoms are said to be λόγῳ θεωρητά. (Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, Eng. trans., ii. pp. 222, 226.)

(⁷) Arist. *De An.* iii. 4. 429a, 27, καὶ εὖ δὴ οἱ λέγοντες τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι τόπον εἶδων. But Plato is not a mere conceptualist. See p. 112, above.

(⁸) Cic. *Acad.* i. 7. 25, "Qualitates igitur appellavi, quas ποιότητας Græci vocant: quod ipsum apud Græcos non est vulgi verbum, sed philosophorum."

(⁹) Leibniz, *Epistola ad Hanschium de Phil. Plat.* (Erdm. p. 445).

(¹⁰) Cf. Lutoslawski, *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, pp. 425 and 492: "It is very strange that in the whole discussion about the traces of the theory of ideas in the *Laws* nobody cared to distinguish between the earlier self-existing ideas and the ideas as known from the dialectical dialogues, where they appear as existing only in souls. Such ideas, equivalent to perfect notions, cannot have been abandoned by Plato, etc." If sufficient stress be laid on the word "perfect" before "notions," the passage seems to me not inaccurate, though it is too apt to suggest Conceptualism as opposed to all Realism.

(¹¹) Mill, *Logic*, Bk. ii. chap. ii. § 3, *note* (ed. 8, i. p. 204); Bk. i. chap. vii. § 4. Cf. *Autobiography*, p. 221.

(¹²) When Bacon, *Nov. Org.* ii. 2, says, "Licet enim in natura nihil vere existat præter corpora individua," he

reveals the atomist assumption which underlies his view of nature.

(¹³) Cf. Lotze, *Logic*, Bk. iii. chap. ii. § 317 (Eng. trans., ed. 1, p. 441).

(¹⁴) Cf. Mr. Bosanquet's Essay "On the True Conception of Another World" in his *Essays and Addresses*, originally published as Introduction to a Translation of part of Hegel's *Æsthetic*.

(¹⁵) Mr. Bywater, in *The Journal of Philology*, v. p. 122, conjectures ἀλλ' ἄλλων instead of ἀλλήλων in *Rep.* 476 A. I have sought in the text to show that ἀλλήλων does not necessarily involve an anticipation of the doctrine of the *Sophistes*.

(¹⁶) For the arguments in favour of putting *Rep.* v.–vii. later than viii. and ix., see Lutoslawski, *op. cit.* pp. 323, 324. But he fully admits that this does not involve a denial of the artistic unity of the *Republic* (p. 291). That the middle books were composed at a later date than the others does not of itself prove that their subject-matter did not belong to the original plan; but the matter probably grew in Plato's hands.

(¹⁷) Οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἔτι ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας πρεσβεία καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος. These words of the *Republic* are referred to by Plotinus, *Ennead*, v. 1. 8. They may almost be called the central point of the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the Absolute, and are pregnant with significance for the Mysticism of later ages.

(¹⁸) Cf. Professor Campbell's note on *Soph.* 248 A in his edition.

CHAPTER V

The subject of this chapter has also been treated by me in a paper read before the International Congress of Philosophy, held in Paris in 1900, and published in a French translation, for

which I am indebted to the care of M. Élie Halévy, in the *Bibliothèque du Congrès*, tome iv. Dr. Henry Jackson's articles on Plato's later theory of ideas will be found in the *Journal of Philology*, vols. x., xi., xiii., xiv., xv. While obliged to differ from him and some other Cambridge Platonic scholars as to the precise nature of this later theory, I gratefully acknowledge the indebtedness which all students of Plato must feel to his σαφήνεια and ἀκρίβεια in the treatment of Platonic questions.

(1) Proclus, *ad Tim.* p. 5 A, p. 10 (Schneider), referred to by Grote, *Plato*, ii. p. 291, *note*. Proclus's commentary on the *Parm.* is printed in Stallbaum's edition of the dialogue. It is clear from the *Phileb.* (15-18) that Plato recognises the logical significance (in Hegel's sense of "logic") of the discussion about the One and the Many; but in the *Parm.* (second part) he seems to be thinking mainly of the mathematical aspects of the question, and not directly of its theological aspects.

(2) Grote, *Plato*, ii. p. 264.

(3) See Chap. II. *note* 3, above. Arist. *Top.* iv. 2. 122b, 26, cannot be regarded as a certain reference to *Parm.* 138 B, for *Theæt.* 181 c *seq.* contains a fuller discussion of motion.

(4) We might apply the epigram of *Anth. Pal.* ix. 358, where the *Phædo* is supposed to say: εἴ με Πλάτων οὐ γράψῃ, δύω ἐγένοντο Πλάτῳνες. Panætius had pronounced the *Phædo* spurious.

(5) Cf. Élie Halévy, *La Théorie Platonicienne des Sciences* (1896), p. xvii.

(6) See note 10 on Chap. IV., above.

(7) When Mr. Archer Hind says that ἐκάστου in *Tim.* 51 c (εἶδος ἐκάστου νοητόν) means "only every class naturally determined," understanding, as he does, "naturally determined" to apply only to living creatures and fire, air, water and earth, this seems to me a quite unjustifiable twisting of Plato's words to suit a preconceived and otherwise indefensible theory. Mr. A. E. Taylor very pertinently asks whether Plato can have thought "the Auto-Bug of more

worth and import in the scheme of things than αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστι δικαιοσύνη" (*Mind*, N.S. v. p. 304, note). Mr. Taylor's arguments against Dr. Jackson and Mr. Archer Hind seem to me quite convincing; but I cannot agree with him in regarding *Parm.* as possibly earlier than *Rep.*, or even with Mr. Waddell in placing it not later than the most abstract discussions in the *Republic* (edition of *Parmenides*, p. xxxiii). Aristotle's phrase in *Met.* A 3. § 8, 1070a, 18 (διὸ δὴ οὐ κακῶς ὁ Πλάτων ἔφη ὅτι εἶδη ἐστὶν ὅποσα φύσει) has been used as an argument for the view that Plato's later theory restricted the ideas to "natural kinds"—in the sense of organic species. I do not think it can be proved that Aristotle's criticisms relate specially to the later theory: the *Phædo* is the only dialogue he names in his criticisms. And the phrase ὅποσα φύσει, as used by Plato, would not be inconsistent even with the form of the theory which we find in *Rep.* x. It is the *φυτουργός* who makes the idea of a bed.

(⁸) Dr. Jackson, in the *Journal of Philology*, x. p. 286 *et seq.* and 293, in order to suit his theory that the ideas are represented by the "mixed class" of the *Phileb.*, proposes to omit τοὺς ἀριθμούς in Arist. *Met.* A 6. § 8, 987b, 22, and to add καὶ τοὺς ἀριθμούς to the end of the preceding sentence. The words τοὺς ἀριθμούς were read in their present place by Alex. Aphr., and treated as in apposition to τὰ εἶδη, an interpretation which Bonitz approves. "The ideas, regarded as numbers [as they were by some of the contemporary Platonists whom Aristotle criticises], are a plurality or multiplicity which participates in unity." So we might paraphrase the passage. But I do not think, with Bonitz, that there is in this any necessary inconsistency with Plato's doctrine, though the introduction of the Pythagorean formula of "numbers" may be a somewhat retrograde development of Plato. It is the element of form, unity, or "limit" which constitutes an idea as distinct from the manifold of sensible things, though the recognition of ideas, in the plural,

is now seen by Plato (in the *Philebus*) to involve an element of the many even in the ideal sphere. Zeller's omission of τὰ εἶδη, or Schwegler's interpretation, which would seem to require the omission of τοὺς before ἀριθμούς, would not affect this general view of Plato's later doctrine.

(⁹) It is worth noting that in *Phileb.* 16 D we have the phrase τὴν τοῦ ἀπείρου ιδέαν. Even if it be said that ιδέα is not here used in the strictest technical sense (but is ιδέα ever to Plato as merely technical as we make it?), the use of such a phrase at all shows that the main feature of Plato's later theory cannot have been a restriction of the ideas. In 17A there is no excuse for rejecting the words καὶ πολλά. Note that in the *Timæus* it is by a kind of spurious *thought* (not sense-perception) that "the other" is apprehended.

(¹⁰) Cf. Lutoslawski, *op. cit.* p. 401.

(¹¹) Cf. Benn, *Greek Philosophers*, i. p. 283. "If, as we sometimes feel tempted to conjecture, those criticisms [of the *Parmenides*] were first suggested to him by Aristotle in conversation, it will be still more evident that they were received without offence." Ueberweg and Schaarschmidt thought that Aristotle was alluded to, but held the dialogue not to be Plato's. Teichmüller supposed Plato to refute Aristotle's objections (*Neue Studien zur Geschichte der Begriffe*, Heft iii. pp. 363-370).

(¹²) Diog. Laert. v. 1. § 35.

(¹³) Even in this brief discussion I must, however, notice one other argument which has been used in support of the view that Aristotle's criticisms refer to a later and restricted theory of ideas. In *Met.* A 9. § 6, 990b, 15, Aristotle says, ἔτι δὲ οἱ ἀκριβέστεροι τῶν λόγων, οἱ μὲν τῶν πρὸς τι ποιοῦσιν ιδέας, ὧν οὐ φάμεν εἶναι καθ' αὐτὸ γένος. This has usually been taken to mean that the Platonists did not admit ideas of relation, *e.g.* likeness, unlikeness, etc.—favourite illustrations with Plato in *Phædo*, *Rep.*—and it should be noted in *Theæt.* also (186A). I venture to think Aristotle has

been misunderstood. What he seems to mean is either—(1) that we, the Platonists, do not attempt to bring things that are merely relative to something else (*τὰ πρὸς τι*) into the same class with things that have their meaning *per se* (cf. *Eth. Nic.* i. 6. § 8, 1096b, 8); or rather, perhaps, (2) that we do not seek to bring co-relatives under the *same* idea. Thus, in *Parm.* 133 E, no attempt is made to assert one common *γένος* of masters and slaves; and yet, conceivably, a critic applying an *ἀκριβέστερος λόγος*, *i.e.* urging the ultimate unification of whatever has anything in common, might insist on doing so.

CHAPTER VI

(1) On the knowledge of Plato in the Middle Ages, see note 3 on Chap. X.

(2) "We are led by Plato himself to regard the *Timæus*, not as the centre or inmost shrine of the edifice, but as a detached building in a different style, framed not after the Socratic, but after some Pythagorean model." Jowett, *Plato*, iii. p. 345 (ed. 3). The word "detached" is perhaps too strong. For the translations from the *Timæus* in this chapter I have not followed either Jowett or Mr. Archer Hind exactly, but am indebted to both.

(3) On Alcmaëon, cf. Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers* (Eng. trans.), i. p. 148 and notes.

(4) Cf. Jowett's *Plato*, iii. p. 418 (ed. 3).

(5) In *Phædr.* 248 D the *βίος μαντικός ἢ τελεστικός* is placed fifth in the scale of lives, while that of the philosopher comes first. Cf. also what is said about priests and diviners in *Polit.* 290 C-E. Hegel, quoting the passage from *Timæus*, 71, remarks: "Plato had a better idea of the relation of prophecy generally to the state of sober consciousness than many moderns, who supposed that the Platonic language

on the subject of enthusiasm authorised their belief in the sublimity of the revelations of somnambulistic vision" (*Encycl.* § 406 *note*, trans. in Wallace, *Hegel's Phil. of Mind*, pp. 33, 34).

(⁶) See Mr. Archer Hind's note on *Tim.* 40 B; also an art. by Professor Lewis Campbell in *Journal of Philology*, v. p. 206 *et seq.* Professor Campbell would translate *εἰλλομένην* "held in, restrained, confined." Aristotle, *De Cælo*, ii. 13. 293*b*, 30, seems to have understood the words in the *Timæus* to mean a rotation of the earth. "The solution offered by Simplicius is, in all probability, substantially the true one. Aristotle is speaking of the interpretation given to these words by the later Platonists, who in many points returned to the 'elements' of Pythagorean teaching. That they should have understood *εἰλλομένην* to mean 'rolling' was the more natural, inasmuch as Plato's use of the verb *εἶλλω*, which he probably borrowed from the poets, was becoming obsolete" (Campbell, p. 214). If Plato had meant to follow the Pythagoreans in making the earth revolve, he was surely mathematician enough to have added that its revolution was in the contrary direction to that of the heavens and at half the velocity, so that the result would be the same as that of a stationary earth and the heavens alone revolving.

(⁷) The word *οὐρανός* had been used for the universe by the old philosophers. Plato may use the word here rather than *κόσμος* or *τόδε τὸ πᾶν*, because the movement of the heavens was regarded by him as the fullest expression of the divine in the visible world. I have followed Jowett in using the word "heaven" or "heavens" for *οὐρανός*, simply to mark any possible distinction between *κόσμος* and *οὐρανός*.

(⁸) *Εἰκὼν τοῦ ποιητοῦ* is the reading of the best M.S. (A). *νοητοῦ* is the reading of others. *ποιητοῦ* is defended by Mr. Archer Hind on the principle that it is the more difficult reading. *νοητοῦ* suits the immediate context better. Cf. Professor Cook Wilson in *Classical Review*, iii. p. 121.

(⁹) Justin. *Apol.* i. 60.

(¹⁰) Clemens, *Strom.* v. 14. 104. The same passage is referred to in Athenagoras, *Suppl.* c. 23, and Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* xi. 17. Dr. Bigg in his *Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (to which I am indebted for these references), p. 249, argues that the second Platonic Epistle must belong to a different school from the sixth, in which only two gods are spoken of, that it must be of later date, and was apparently unknown to Philo or any heathen philosopher before Numenius. The trinity of *Ep.* ii. is referred to by Plotinus in the passage (*Ennead*, v. 1. 8) already cited in note 17 on Chap. IV.

(¹¹) Cf. Spinoza, *Ethica*, i. prop. 16: "Ex necessitate divinæ naturæ infinita infinitis modis sequi debent." Leibniz, applying his principle of continuity, carries out the same idea even more thoroughly. Cf. the passage quoted from a letter in Professor Latta's edition of the *Monadology*, etc., pp. 37-39. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* i. qu. 47, art. 1 and 2, argues that there must be diversity and inequality among created things; otherwise the world would not be perfect. This is precisely the Platonic doctrine.

CHAPTER VII

(¹) Cf. *Alcib.* i. 130, where it is argued that the soul rules the body, and is therefore the true self.

(²) Cf. Mr. Archer Hind's edition of the *Phædo*, Introd. § 4; also art. in *Journal of Philology*, x. p. 120. The hypothesis of Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 557 note, that "in the *Republic* we have two essentially different stages of Plato's doctrine only externally connected," seems to me quite unnecessary. The work may have taken many years to write, and grown in his hands, but there is no greater development of doctrine of it than can be found in some of the smaller dialogues, where

the first statements of Socrates are corrected and modified later on. Cf. what is said about the *Republic* on p. 161, above.

(³) Cf. Bosanquet, *Companion to Plato's Republic*, p. 404.

(⁴) I have treated the subject of this chapter somewhat more fully in an art. "On Plato's *Phædo*" in *Mind*, xi. (O.S.), reprinted in *Darwin and Hegel, etc.*

CHAPTER VIII

(¹) In *Protag.* 333 c (where it is said that the views both of Protagoras and of Socrates will be tested by discussion) the way is prepared for an admission of the relative truth of positions attacked by Socrates.

(²) The "rhapsode," here represented by Ion, is not merely a reciter of the poets, but professes to interpret them, and so has the airs not only of our modern actors, but of our literary critics who work by inspiration. There is nothing in the *Ion* to suggest doubt as to its Platonic authorship.

(³) Xen. *Sympos.* 8. § 21 ; 9 *fin.*

(⁴) There is a full discussion of the distinction between "demotic" and philosophical virtue in Mr. Archer Hind's ed. of the *Phædo*, Appendix I.

(⁵) Cf. Arist. *Pol.* vii. 13. § 11. 1332a, 40.

(⁶) Teichmüller, *Literarische Fehden*, i. p. 202 *et seq.*

(⁷) Cf. Arist. *Pol.* i. 13. § 10. 1260a, 25.

(⁸) Professor Burnet in his *Aristotle's Ethics* (note on vii. 11. § 3) maintains that it was Speusippus, and not the Cynics, who held that pleasure was altogether evil. With Fritzsche and Grant, he quotes Aulus Gellius, ix. 5 : "Speusippus vetusque omnis Academia voluptatem et dolorem mala esse dicunt opposita inter sese." I do not think this view can be reconciled with the obvious meaning of Aristotle's words in c. 13. § 1 : οὐ γὰρ ἂν φαίη ὅπερ κακόν τι εἶναι τὴν ἡδονήν. Here the subject of φαίη must be Σπεύσιππος. If we under-

stand *τις* as subject (with Grant, following the Paraphrast), and yet accept Aulus Gellius's statement, we make Aristotle refute the opinion that pleasure is an evil by saying that nobody would call it an evil, which is hardly respectful to Speusippus. Professor Burnet makes *Σπενσ.* subject (and Stewart, *note a.l.*, thinks this possible); but I do not see how, if Speusippus "would not call pleasure *per se* a species of evil," Aulus Gellius can be right. Aristotle would have admitted that pleasure might be "accidentally" evil. His words here must therefore outweigh the statement of a late writer and a mere literary man like Aulus Gellius, who probably would not appreciate the difference between "*non bonum*" and "*malum*." And, if Gellius is an authority, why not accept his still stronger remark about Antisthenes ("Summum malum dicit [voluptatem esse])? It is true we have the statement that Antisthenes said that pleasure was to be pursued after toil and not before it (Stobæus, *Florileg.* 29. 65), and that ἡδονὴ ἀμεταμέλητος was good (Athenæus, *Deipn.* xi. 6 (513)). But (1) in the days of respectable and moderate Stoicism the sayings of the Cynic doctor may have been toned down; or (2) Antisthenes may have meant that man's toil was never over, and that all pleasure was followed by regret. And, in any case, we need not expect strict consistency of language from a rhetorical preacher of extreme views. At one moment he might say, "May I be mad, rather than feel pleasure!" and the next, for purposes of edification, commend the pleasures of the ascetic life, or even of the good man on the rack. Plato, *Phileb.* 44 c, refers to those who deny that there are any pleasures; his words δεινούς λεγομένους τὰ περὶ φύσιν could hardly refer to Speusippus so well as to Antisthenes, who wrote περὶ φύσεως (Diog. Laert. vi. 1. § 17), and whose gospel was "the return to nature,"—a conception which may, as has been suggested, owe something to the sophist Hippias. But, even if Plato there refers to views becoming prevalent in his own school,

the passage would not prove that Speusippus held that pleasure was evil, but is quite compatible with what I take to be the view of Aristotle.

(9) *Werke*, xiv. p. 275 (*History of Philosophy*, Eng. trans. ii. p. 96).

(10) Cf. Arist. *Pol.* vii. 10. 1329b, 2 seq.

(11) Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, ed. 3, p. 264.

(12) An account of the Jesuit Mission in Paraguay will be found in Kaufmann, *Socialism and Communism in their Practical Application* (S.P.C.K.). Cf. Voltaire in his *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, and in *Candide*, chap. xiv. ; J. S. Mill, *Political Economy*, ii. c. 1. § 4.

(13) Cf. note 2 on Chap. II., above.

(14) Hegel, *Werke*, xiv. p. 195 (*Hist. of Phil.*, Eng. trans. ii. p. 26).

(15) This represents roughly the distinction between (1) the restrictions put upon art in Books ii. and iii., and (2) the severer criticism in Book x. I have not attempted in this little volume to treat specially of Plato's attitude to art, mainly because a special treatment would be disproportionate where the whole scale is so small. The only dialogue in which the subject of beauty is expressly discussed is the *Greater Hippias*, whose genuineness is reasonably doubted, because Aristotle in referring to the *Lesser Hippias* (*Met.* Δ 29. § 9. 1025a, 6) calls it simply "the *Hippias*." This seems to imply, though it cannot be said absolutely to prove, that *Hipp. maj.* was unknown to Aristotle. *Top.* vi. 7. 146a, 22, which Bonitz cites as a probable reference to *Hipp. maj.*, only proves at the most that Aristotle knew one of the definitions of the beautiful there discussed; and the definition quoted is not exactly that of *Hipp. maj.* 298A (τὸ καλὸν ἐστὶ τὸ δι' ἀκοῆς τε καὶ ὀψέως ἡδύ); Aristotle is dealing with an alternative form of definition, τὸ δι' ὀψέως ἢ τὸ δι' ἀκοῆς ἡδύ. If the dialogue is not Plato's, it is by far the best and most interesting of the imitations, and is not a mere imitation, but

a highly original discussion in a genuinely Platonic vein. If it is Plato's, it must in respect of its philosophical stage be assigned to the period of the *Gorgias*, *Phædo*, *Republic*, while *Hipp. min.* may belong to the earlier "Socratic" period. *Hipp. maj.* contains the fully developed doctrine of Ideas. (I cannot understand M. Lutoslawski saying it contains nothing of interest for Plato's logic.) After putting aside the attempts of Hippias to explain beauty by examples of particular beautiful objects, none of which can be αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, Socrates discusses in succession three general definitions—(1) "The beautiful is τὸ πρέπον" (293 E). This is rejected because the fitting or becoming is only what makes things appear beautiful. (2) "The beautiful is the useful" (τὸ χρησιμόν)—a definition which had satisfied the Xenophontic Socrates (*Mem.* iii. 8; cf. iv. 6. § 9), but is here criticised. (3) "The beautiful is that which is pleasant to the senses of hearing and sight." But why, it is asked, do we combine the pleasures of these two senses (as "aesthetic" pleasures, to use the modern phrase), and distinguish them from the pleasures of the other senses? This important difficulty suggests a modification of the definition: "The beautiful is the pleasant which is profitable or useful." But even this is not free from difficulties; it seems to deny that the beautiful is the good. And so the dialogue leaves the problem unsolved, though it contains the germs of many later theories.

Even apart from the *Greater Hippias*, Plato has done much to raise the problems of *Æsthetics*, but he cannot be said to have concerned himself specially with them in the sense in which he does concern himself with those of Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, and Politics. He treats art simply in its relation to morality. It was reserved for Plotinus to make what seems the obvious application of the Platonic idealism, and to argue that the arts need not simply imitate the visible, but go back to the reasons (λόγους) from which nature comes (*Ennead*, v. 8. 1). Cf. Bosanquet, *History of Æsthetic*, chaps. iv. and v.

CHAPTER IX

(¹) Grote, *Plato*, iii. p. 306.

(²) Cf. *Contrat Social*, iv. c. 8.

(³) Cf. Mrs. Grote's *Personal Life of George Grote*, chap. xxxiv.

(⁴) Cf., e.g., *Pol.* vii. 17. § 10. 1336b, 14.

(⁵) Cf. Zeller, *Plato* (Eng. trans.), p. 545.

(⁶) Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, c. 48 (p. 370): "Plato, as it were mystifying and veiling the matter in many places, calls the opposing principles 'the same' and 'the other,' but in the *Laws*, being now an elderly man, he no longer speaks in enigmas and symbolically, but names them by their true names; for he says that the universe was moved not by one soul, but by several or at least by two, etc." The language of the *Timæus* is symbolical; but the language of the *Laws* is still less philosophically strict from Plato's own point of view. Cudworth in his *Intellectual System of the Universe*, Book i. chap. iv. § 13, has an elaborate refutation of Plutarch's account of Plato's opinions on the evil soul of the world.

(⁷) *Confess.* vii. 12; *De Civ. Dei*, xi. 22, xii. 2.

CHAPTER X

(¹) Mr. Thomas Whittaker in his work on *The Neo-Platonists: A Study in the History of Hellenism* (the subtitle indicates his point of view) protests rightly against the description of Neo-Platonism as "the school of Alexandria." He asserts the claims of Neo-Platonism to represent the genuine Hellenic tradition—most successfully, I think, in the case of Plotinus, least so in the case of Iamblichus. Not having the special knowledge which would justify me

in pronouncing on the precise amount of the non-Hellenic element in Neo-Platonism, I have been careful to make my brief statement moderate and cautious.

(²) *De Civ. Dei*, viii. c. 5 ; cf. c. 12 ; *Confess.* vii. 9.

(³) Cf. Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, i. p. 37 and note 3 ; also Appendix XIV. in vol. ii. p. 744. The mediæval translations of the *Phædo* and the *Meno* seem to have been made only about 1160 A.D. Mr. Rashdall notes that Plato was never the subject of mediæval lectures.

(⁴) *Inferno*, Canto iv. 131-135.

(⁵) Cf. Vasari, *Lives of the Painters* (Eng. trans. in "Temple Series," i. p. 210) ; Renan, *Averroes*, p. 311.

(⁶) Cf. Pater, *The Renaissance*, Essay on Pico della Mirandola (pp. 38-41 in ed. 2), where the visit of Pico to Ficino is described. Ficino had just finished his translation of Plato, and it was during his conversation with Pico that he formed the design of translating Plotinus. On Pico cf. also Mr. J. M. Rigg's "Introduction" to Sir Thomas More's *Life of Pico* (London, 1890).

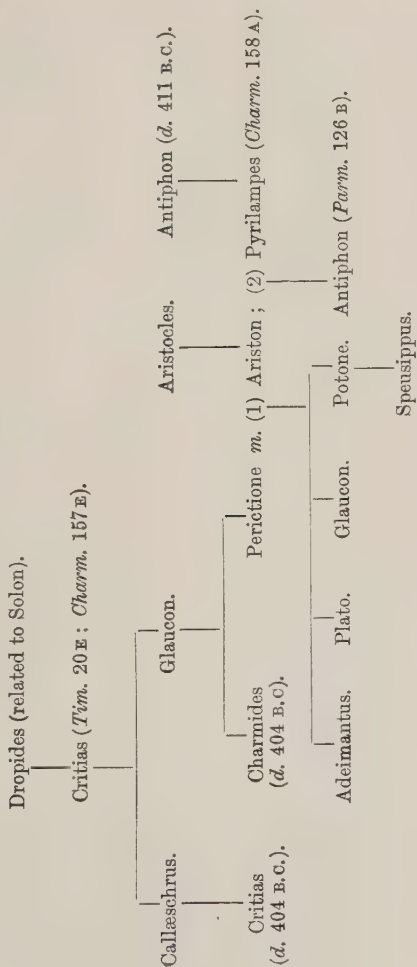
(⁷) Henry More, *Psychozoia*, Canto i. 4, quoted by Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*, ii. p. 314. The last four lines of the passage from Milton link Plato with what Leibniz called "barbarous philosophy." Cf. Latta, *Leibniz's Monadology*, etc. p. 403.

(⁸) Cf. Karl Michelet's edition of *Arist. Eth. Nic.* vol. ii. p. xii.

APPENDIX I

PLATO'S FAMILY CONNECTIONS.

(AFTER UEBERWEG.)



APPENDIX II

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF PLATO'S LIFE AND WRITINGS.

For the dates of events in Greek history I have followed Mr. Evelyn Abbott's *Skeleton Outline of Greek History chronologically arranged*. It must be remembered that, unless we know the year of an Olympiad and the period of the year in which an event is said to have occurred, we cannot always fix the precise year according to our mode of reckoning.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS.	PLATO'S LIFE.	PROBABLE DATES OF PLATO'S WRITINGS.
Pericles died, 429 B.C. Battle of Delium, 424 B.C. The <i>Clouds</i> of Aristophanes, 423 B.C.	Plato born, 428 or 427 (?) B.C.	
End of Peloponnesian War and Tyranny of "The Thirty," 404 B.C.	Plato associates with Socrates, 407- 399 B.C.	Youthful Poems.
Socrates put to death, 399 B.C.	Plato leaves Athens for some time, 399 B.C., and travels (?). Plato again in Athens (?).	<i>Lysis</i> (according to tradition).
Battle at Corinth, 394 B.C. <i>Ecclesiastusae</i> of Aristophanes, 392 B.C.		<i>Apologia</i> , <i>Euthyphro</i> , <i>Crito</i> , <i>Char- mides</i> , <i>Laches</i> , <i>Lysis</i> (?).
		<i>Protagoras</i> (circ. 392 B.C. (?)). <i>Meno</i> .
		<i>Euthydemus</i> (soon after 390 B.C., or possibly of later date).

Peace of Antalcidas, 387 B.C.	First visit to Sicily: on return opens school in the Academy, 387 B.C. (æt. 40).	<i>Gorgias.</i> <i>Cratylus.</i> <i>Symposium</i> (soon after 385 B.C.). <i>Phædo.</i> <i>Phædrus.</i> <i>Republic</i> (probably written at various times between 387 and 368 B.C.).
Mantineæ broken up by Lacedæmonians, 385 B.C. Aristotle born, 384 B.C. Ismenias put to death, 383 B.C. <i>Panegyricus</i> of Isocrates, 380 B.C. Lysias died, 378 B.C. Battle of Leuctra, 371 B.C. Mantineæ rebuilds its walls, 370 B.C.	Plato æt. 50 in 378 B.C.	
Fighting at Corinth between 369 and 366 B.C. Dionysius the younger succeeds his father at Syracuse, 368 B.C. Aristotle comes to Athens, 367 B.C.	Second visit to Sicily (æt. 60), 368 B.C.	<i>Theætetus.</i> <i>Parmenides.</i> <i>Sophistes.</i> <i>Politics.</i>
Epizephyrian Locrians conquered by Syracusans, 356 B.C. Dion assassinated, 353 B.C. Aristotle æt. 37.	Third visit to Sicily (æt. 67), 361 B.C.	<i>Philebus</i> (?). <i>Timæus.</i> <i>Critias.</i>
	Plato died (æt. 81), 347 B.C.	<i>Laws.</i>

APPENDIX III

LIST OF THE PLATONIC WRITINGS ACCORDING TO THRASYLLUS
(Diog. Laert. iii. 1. §§ 56-62).

[The names are given first in the Latin forms adopted in the Oxford edition. The numbers, J. i. etc., indicate the volume of Jowett's *Plato* (ed. 3) in which the dialogue will be found.]

TETRALOGIA I.

Euthyphro, J. ii.
Apologia Socratis, J. ii.
Crito, J. ii.
Phædo, J. ii.

TETRALOGIA II.

Cratylus, J. i.
Theætetus, J. iv.
Sophista (*Sophistes*, *Sophist*),
J. iv.
Politicus (*Statesman*), J. iv.

TETRALOGIA III.

Parmenides, J. iv.
Philebus, J. iv.
Symposium (*Banquet*), J. i.
Phædrus, J. i.

TETRALOGIA IV.

Alcibiades I., J. ii. (App. 1).
Alcibiades II., J. ii. (App. 2).
Hipparchus.
Amatores (*Erastæ*, *Anterastæ*,
Rivales).

TETRALOGIA V.

Theages.
Charmides, J. i.
Laches, J. i.
Lysis, J. i.

TETRALOGIA VI.

Euthydemus, J. i.
Protagoras, J. i.
Gorgias, J. ii.
Meno, J. ii.

TETRALOGIA VII.

Hippias Major.

Hippias Minor, J. ii. (App.
1).

Io (*Ion*), J. i.
Menexenus (*Epitaphios*), J. ii.
(App. 1).

TETRALOGIA VIII.

Clitopho (*Clitophon*).
Respublica (*Republic*), J. iii.
Timæus, J. iii.
Critias, J. iii.

TETRALOGIA IX.

Minos.
Leges (*Laws*), J. v.
Epinomis.
Epistulæ XIII. (*Epistles*).

ADMITTEDLY SPURIOUS (*νοθεύ- μενοι ὁμολογουμένως*).

Midon [not extant].
Eryxias (or *Erasistratus*), J.
ii. (App. 2).
Halcyon [generally in Lucian's
works].
Sisyphus.
Demodocus.
Axiochus.
Phæaces [not extant].
Chelidon [not extant].
Hebdome [not extant].
Epimenides [not extant].

In our MSS. and editions, but not
mentioned in *Diog. Laert.* iii.
1. §§ 56-62, are—

De Justo.
De Virtute.
Definitiones.

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